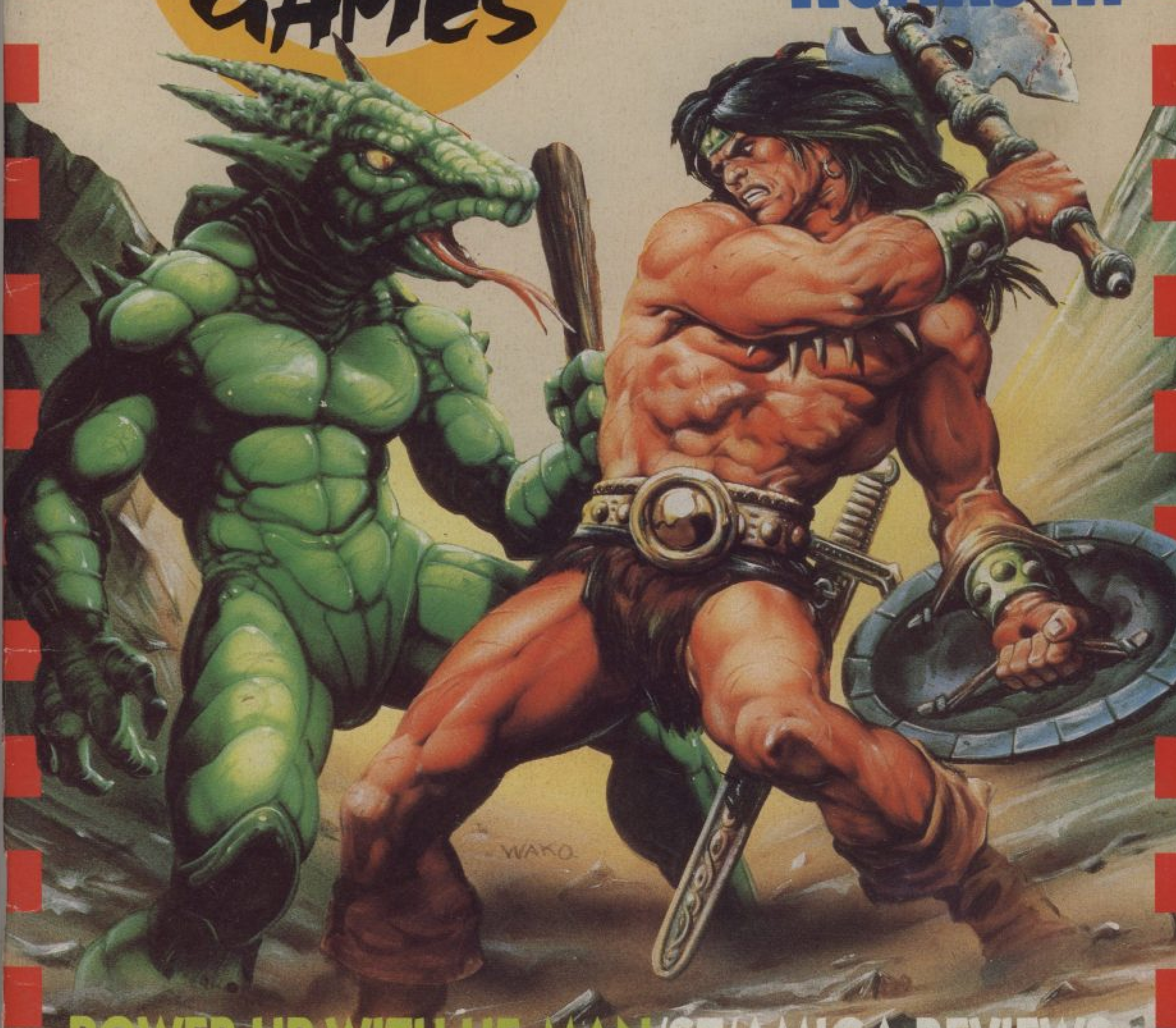
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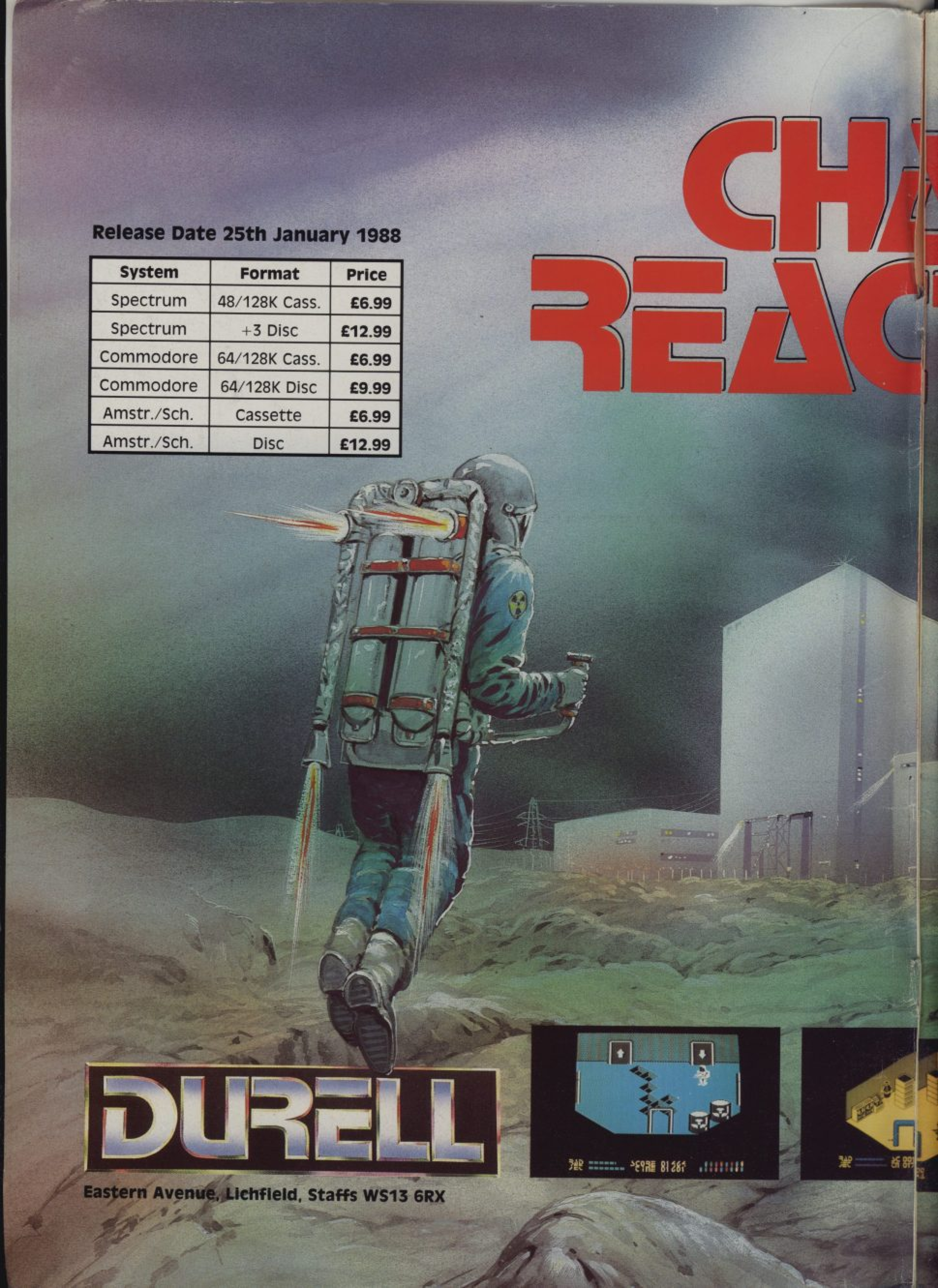


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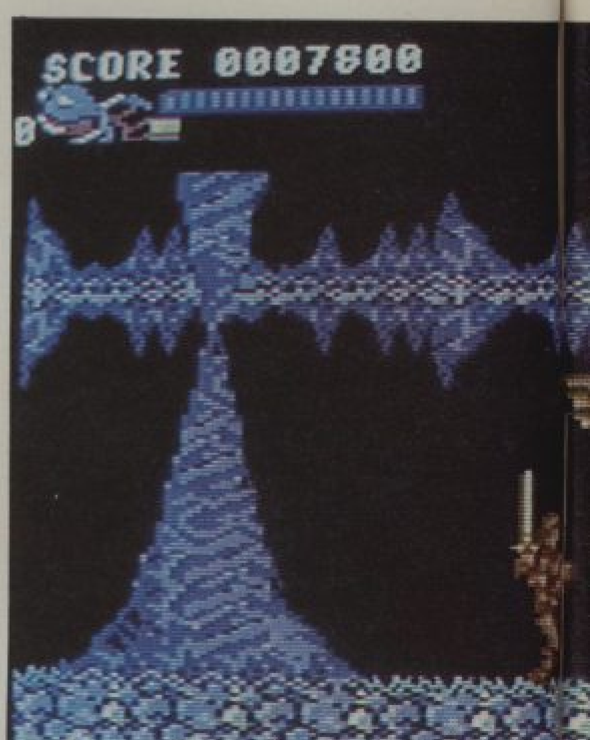
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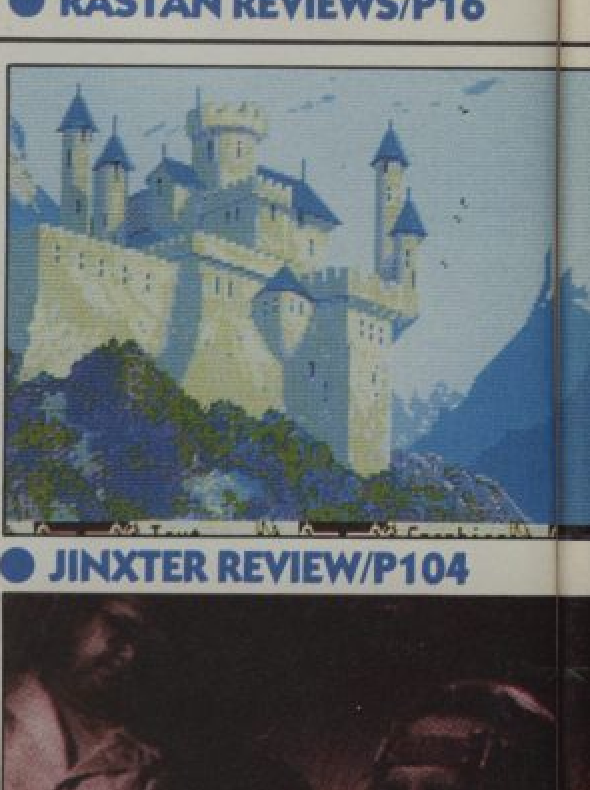
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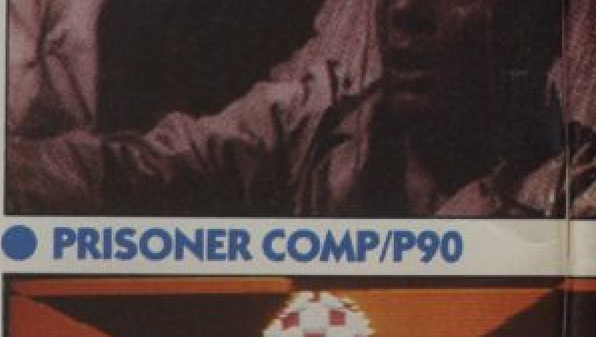
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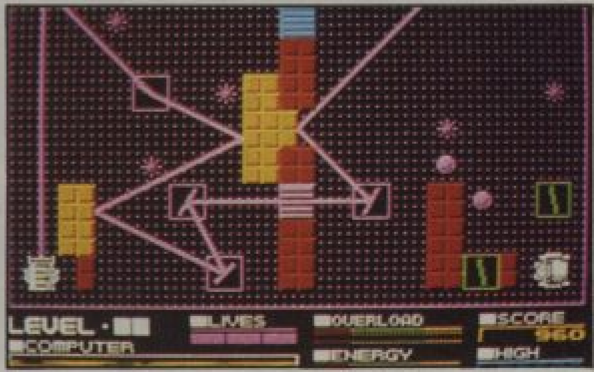
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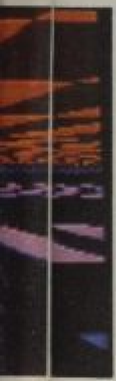




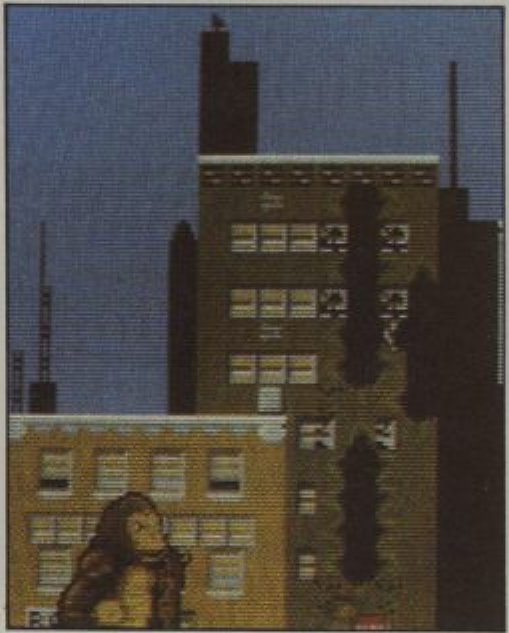










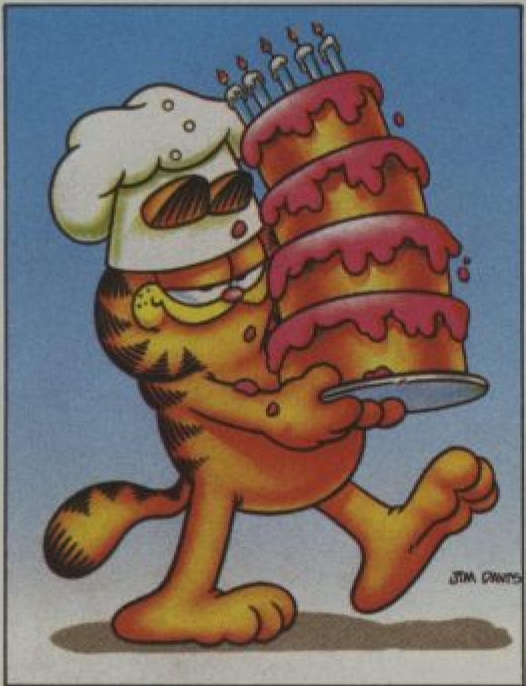


Inside Story

Grasp this hand that I am holding out to you, give it a good shake and become personally acquainted with the new Ed. My name is Eugene Lacey and some of you may already be familiar with my handle as I used to Edit Commodore User and, before that in the dim and distant pasts hacked it as a Staff Writer on C+VG. That's the formalities over with now for this issues goodies. let the fanfares sound for the first instalment of our gripping new cartoon series – Shuk and Doode. It tells a tale of two totally weird characters with a mission in the UK.

Next up – the more observant of you may have noticed our Arcade Action supplement – taped to the front page. Inside this bumper batch of coin-op info is the chance to win the superb new Aaargh! machine from Arcadia. Your favourite regular features have got a new year sparkle to them with first reviews of Rastan for the 64 and stacks of 16 bit games t'boot. What are you waiting for? Get stuck in.



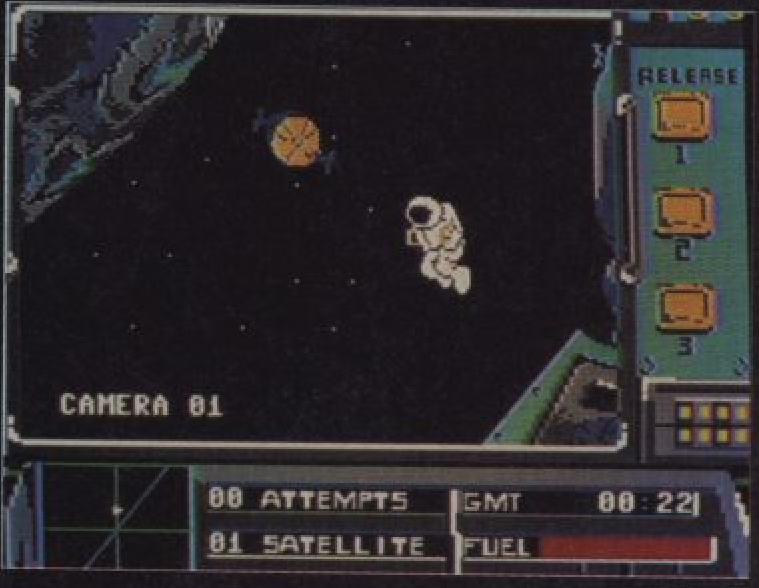




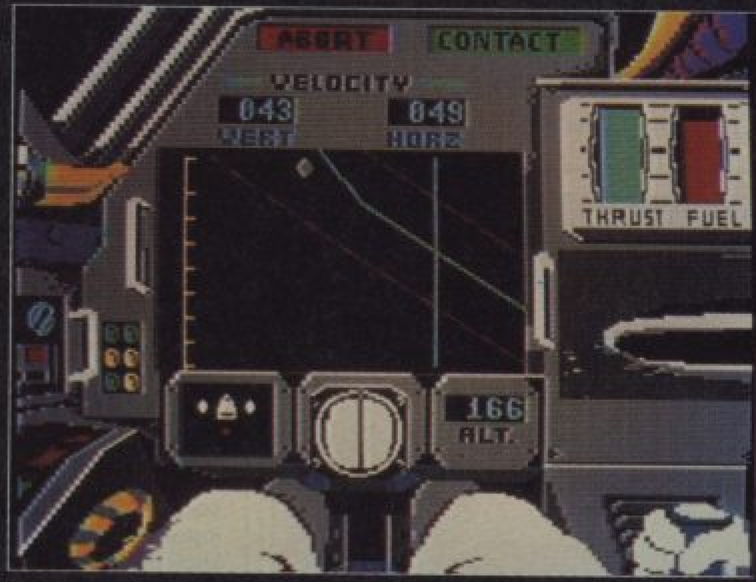
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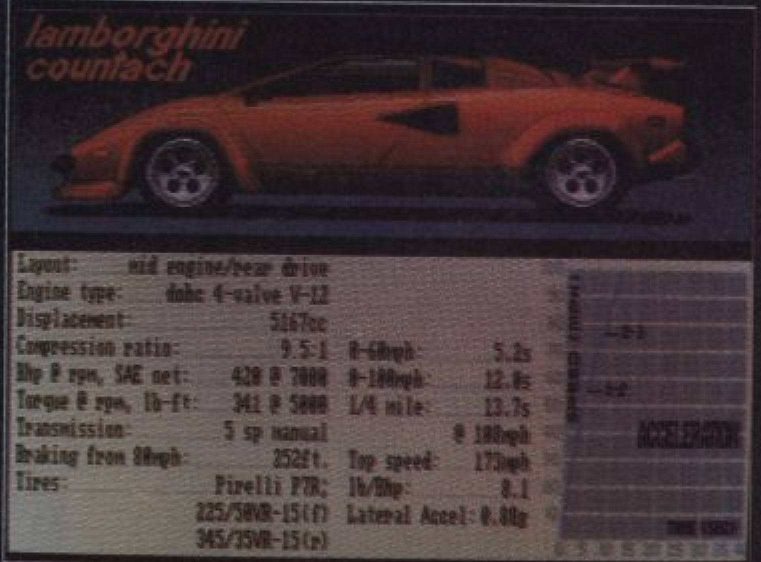
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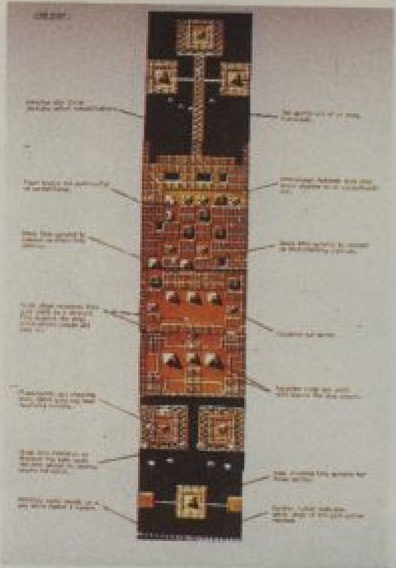
Big Bad Bedlam.

■ Is it a madhouse? Is it chaos? No, it's *Bedlam*, the inter-galactic wham bam blast'em to bits offering from Go!

And this is a sample of one of the 16 space stations to zoom over to take on up to 18 aliens at any one time. Sounds a real nerve-shredder.

There are also teleports, forcefields plus a 17th "deep space" bonus level.

Bedlam is due out on Amstrad, Spectrum and Commodore during January.



Sega Sizzler

■ Calling all **Sega** sensation seekers. Here are the hot hits heading your way between now and April.



They are: Kung-Kid, Fantasy Zone II, After Burner, Global Defense, Zaxxon 3D, Alien Syndrome, Rescue & Mission, Zillion II: The Tri Formation, Alex Kidd: The Lost Stars, Super Boys Monster Land, Cube Zone, Maze Hunter 3D.

Gilbo's Coven.

■ As All Hallow's Eve approaches the powers of evil reach their zenith. The 13 witches covens which dominated the world, ruled over by Lucifer, the Lord of Darklight, are now planning to seize control of the earth.

That is the evil scenario of **Coven,** the game designed by horror author and C+VG writer **John Gilbert. Piranha** will release the game sometime in June.

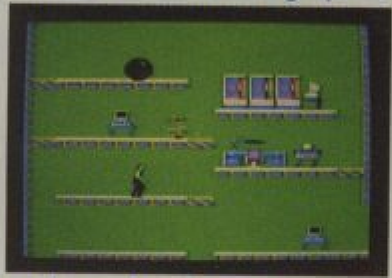
In Coven, you alone stand against the powers of evil and thwart their fiendish plans.

But before finally removing the evils of the earth you must defeat Lucifer and transform the mantle of Darklight to a power of good. Only then can the 13 covens reassemble to do good.

On your broomstick you must fly fast to destroy the evil covens as you only have one night to do your work. The covens are at their most powerful during this time — so beware — but don't despair as there's more power to be picked up for your final conflict with Lucifer in his surreal moonlit kingdom!

Impossible Mission II.

■ Remember **Impossible Mission,** the epic platform adventure game which won more awards than you've had hot dinners? Well, here's the long awaited follow up called, imaginatively, **Impossible Mission II.** Enhanced graphics



and sound and even more puzzles make this a really strong sequel — even though it looks similar to the original. There are five new robot guards, and the whole game is set in a series of interlinked towers with rooms packed with things to discover. Game controls are the same as the original — but this time there's a tape recorder option which gives you clues as you play if you start it up. Even the demo version we played was extremely addictive — so watch out for the real thing when it's released by **Epyx/US Gold** in January.

Krydon Coded.

■ Following on from their successful **Blockbusters** TV tie-in, **Domark** is releasing a new quiz game based on ITV's **Krypton Factor** on its **TV Games** label — and yes, you WILL have to compete in the assault course! Although in the

GAMES OF THE YEAR!

■ As the new year gets under way the game awards for the previous year are starting to be dished out at a series of posh dinners in London's West End.

The first awards in the accolades diary are the Entertainment Software Trade Awards. These are billed as the industry's own awards — nominated by software houses, retailers and magazines.

Best Full Price game went to Elite's **Paperboy,** Cheapo of the year was picked up by Codemasters for their **BMX Sim,** the top adventure was Infocom's **Stationfall,** best arcade game was Ocean's **Arkanoid, Wizball** won the best music award and Magnetic scrolls' **Guild of Thieves** adventure took the best graphics accolade.











Capcom On the go.

■ How's this for a mouth-watering, pulse-pounding glimpse into the future of coin-op conversions?

These four **Capcom** games – **Street Fighter, 1943, Black Tiger** and **Tiger Road** – are heading your way during the first six months of 1988 from *Go!*

Go! has six further Capcom products lined up for release towards the latter half of the year and start of 1989. But for the time being there's no news about what the titles are.





computer version the most strenuous activity is a bit of joystick waggling. But like the TV show the game will also test your brain power with baffling puzzles and intelligence tests. Available on the Spectrum, C64 and Amstrad at a bargain £7.95.



Thundercats :- THE VIDEO

■ You've enjoyed the game, now watch the movie! **Thundercats-Ho!: The Movie**



is now available on video at a bargain £9.99 from stores that stock **The Video Collection** range.

R-type Snapped Up.

■ After months of guessing, heavy negotiating, bids and counter bids some of the hottest coin-op games of last year have now been signed up for conversion to the home systems for later in 1988.

Not surprisingly, many of the games have gone to the large successful companies with the biggest cheque books.

World giant Activision has snapped up Irem's brilliant



shoot-'em up **R Type** and is also rumoured to be chasing the 'state of the art' Sega game **Afterburner.**

Mastertronic makes its first serious bid at the coin-op conversion game with the excellent **Double Dragon.** This Taito game has an enormous cult following and is sure to be a firm favourite to be a monster smash in '88. The cheapo company will also be



converting a number of their own Arcadia coin-ops.

US Gold is firmly in the race with three strong licenses already confirmed in the shape of **Road Blasters, Rolling Thunder,** and **Shackled.**

Only Ocean and Firebird are yet to announce their licenses though it is believed these two companies are engaged in a battle to sign **Operation Wolf** – the graphically superb Taito shoot-'em-up with a military flavour.

ST cheapo's.

■ **Atari ST** owners will be getting a budget treat from **Firebird** who will be releasing a number of cheapo discs very soon. They will include Firebird's budget hits, **Thrust, Warhawk, Harvey Headbanger** and **I-Ball.** Rumoured price is £9.95. 64 owners can get two games on one disc for just £3.99.

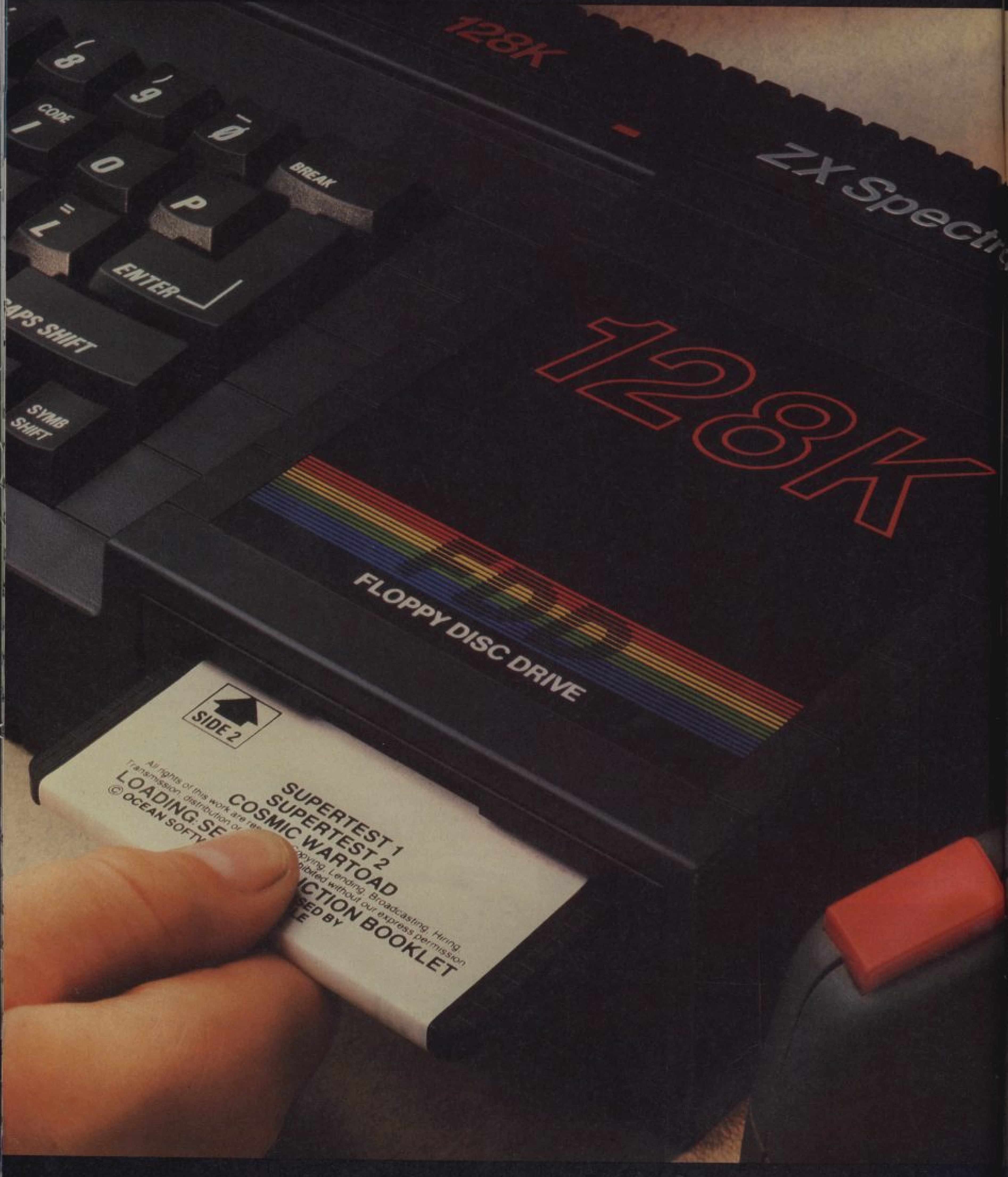
Rack-it all stars

■ A truly international group of programmers has come together to create games for the **Rack-It** label.

Anarchy, the strategy shoot-em-up, is the brainchild of Aussie – **Mike "Crocodile" Sentinella.** Mike bounded barefoot straight off the Quantas plane from Sydney and into the Rack-It offices to present his ticklish teaser. Conceived as a homage to **Boulderdash, Anarchy** looks set to be a success both here and "down under". **Ocean Conqueror,** the submarine simulation, sails in from Hungarian authors **Lajos Palanki** and **Peter Vitray.** Both are at college in Hungary and program in their spare time.

Eric Christensen and **Peter Jepsen** are the Danish authors of **Thunderforce.** The dynamic duo wrote the game as a comic book first before converting the graphics to create the all action C64 version. Then they roped in fellow Danes **Johannes Bjerrgaard,** who created the music for Hewson Hit Eagles, to produce five separate soundtracks for **Thunderforce.**

THE NEW SINCLAIR HAS ONE BIG DISK-



THE SINCLAIR ZX SPECTRUM + 3 WITH 6 FREE GAMES AND A JOYSTICK.

News

Mailers get together.

■ The **Third British Play-By-Mail Convention** will be held at the Porchester Centre, Queensway, London W2, on the 20th of February. And, as last year, Computer Video Games will have a stand there.

Twenty-two PBM companies will also be there and you will be able to talk, quiz and question the people who produce the games.

The doors open at 10.30am and close at 5pm and tickets on the door will cost £2.

Video games for real.

■ **Ocean** has entered the VCR games market with the launch of *ABC Sports'* **Winter Olympics,** claimed to be the first interactive video cassette recorder game to be seen in Britain.

The game consists of a video tape featuring live action segments from the Winter Olympic coverage used in conjunction with a playing board designed to represent a mountain.



Points and moving instructions can be flashed on the screen simultaneously telling the player to "Pause VCR." The exact point at which the player pauses the VCR determines the points value of that turn, and the number of spaces to move on the game board.

Additional random elements are provided by "disaster" spaces on the board which cause misfortunes such as "broken ski" to happen to the player. Landing on a "snowflake" space requires the player to pick a game card. Game cards can affect the player in a positive or negative way.

Players choose from three routes down the mountain, and these vary in difficulty according to the number of potential disaster spaces along the way.

Gameplay integrates Olympic statistics, scoring and rules. The individual's strategic choice of route and events, together with the random live action scoring, ensures that the outcome of every game is unpredictable.

The game, developed under licence from ABC Sports, includes a one-hour VHS video tape containing more than 180 segments of nine events derived from coverage of Olympics, 60 playing cards, six playing tokens, a scoring pad and full instructions. Events include ski-ing, ski jump, figure skating, bobsled and ice hockey.

ABC Sports, **Winter Olympics** sells for £19.95.

Cheap Spooks

■ **Activision's** back catalogue of games – including **Ghostbusters, Eidolon** and **BallBlazer** – is being released as budget titles in a deal with **Mastertronic.** Eight bit games will sell for £1.99 or £2.99 and 16-bit at £9.99.

The deal will also mean that future Activision games will also appear as budget titles at a later date.

Demon Stalker.

■ Here's yet another **Gauntlet** clone. This time from **Electronic Arts** for the C64. Called **Demon Stalker** it offers 99 challenging levels of mazes – all with different goals, messages, monsters and magic. Waiting on level 100 is Calvrak the Demon ready for battle. Each level contains keys, scrolls, chests, food, bells and magic. The items can be either good or evil. Health and strength points increase as you master each level. Monsters spill forth from special vortex generators. They keep on coming until you have destroyed the generators. Familiar, huh? **Demon Stalker** contains a complete menu-driven construction set which allows you to either build your own game from scratch, modify any of the existing levels, or practice play any level. It'll set you back £9.95 on tape £14.95 on disc.

Iron Boobs!

■ If you are into fantasy games you already know that this genre has inspired many artists to produce fabulous work.

If you're a fan then check out **The Guide to Fantasy Art**



Techniques published by **Paper Tiger** at £6.95.

The book looks at the lives and works of eight of the top eight fantasy artists, including **Boris Vallejo.**



Budget Blues.

■ The time of the year when the whole of the working population trembles in fear is fast approaching. Yes, The Budget is upon us once more. It's the time when the Chancellor of the Exchequer balances the country's books.

If you think you could do a better job than the man at Number 11 Downing Street, then check our **Yes, Chancellor** from **Topologika,** the simulation game which allows you to control inflation, taxation, interest rates, social services, wages and foreign trade. The object of the game is to stay in power. It's available on the Amstrad at £9.95.

Music a go go!

■ If you're in a band and think your music deserves a wider audience then why not contact the **Go!** label? If you've got the nifty **Trantor** game you'll know that on the b-side of the tape there's music from a band called **Resistor.** Your band could be on the next Go! tape if the people behind the label like it. Just send your demo tapes to Richard Tisdall at Go!, Media Holdings Ltd, Units 2/3 Holford Way, Holford, Birmingham B6 7AX.

Beauty and the Beast! *

■ Artmaster **Chris Achilleos** has a brand new book of his stunning work out right now. Chris, who created the October '86 C+VG cover, has put together a collection called **Beauty and the Beast.** It's available from good bookshops, or direct from Dragon's World Ltd, Paper Tiger Books, 19 Hereford Square, London SW7 4TS at £11.95 hardback, £6.45 paperback.



* Not Chubbie Williams

CARRIER COMMAND



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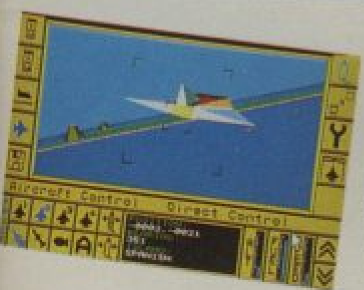
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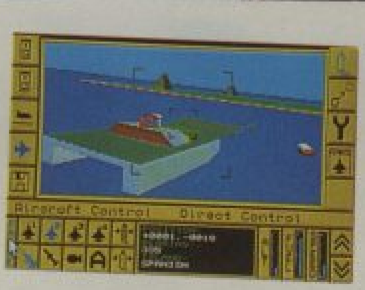
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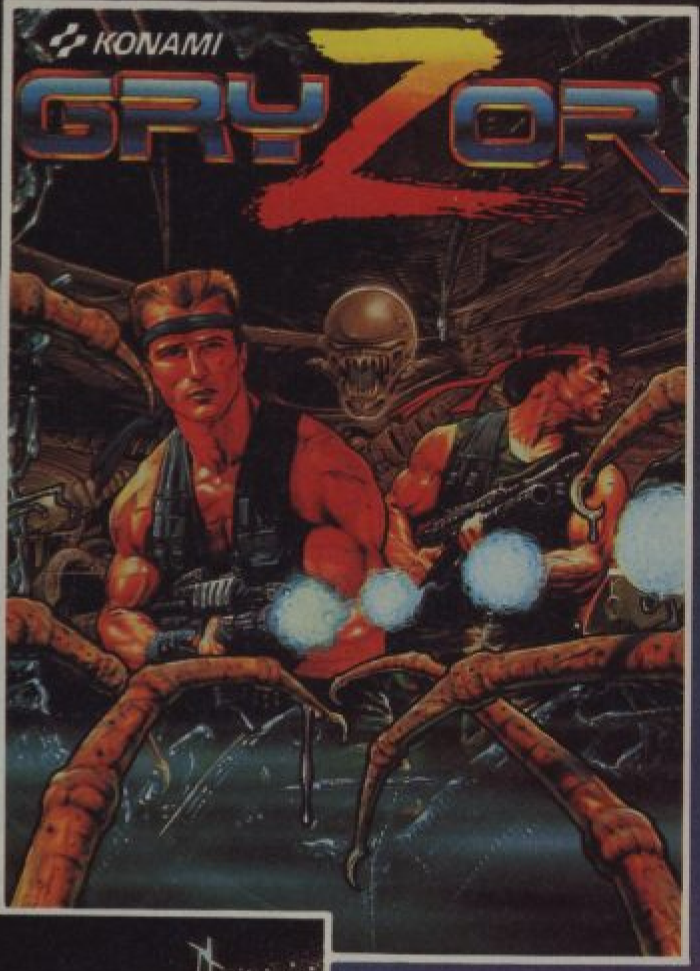
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Reviews this issue

GAME OF THE MONTH C+VG

RASTAN

- MACHINES: CBM 64/SPECTRUM/ AMSTRAD
- SUPPLIER: OCEAN
- PRICE: SPECTRUM £7.95 CASSETTE, SPECTRUM +3 DISK £14.95, COMMODORE 64 £8.95 CASSETTE, COMMODORE DISK £12.95, AMSTRAD £8.95 CASSETTE, AMSTRAD DISK £14.95..
- VERSION TESTED: COMMODORE 64
- REVIEWER: EUGENE

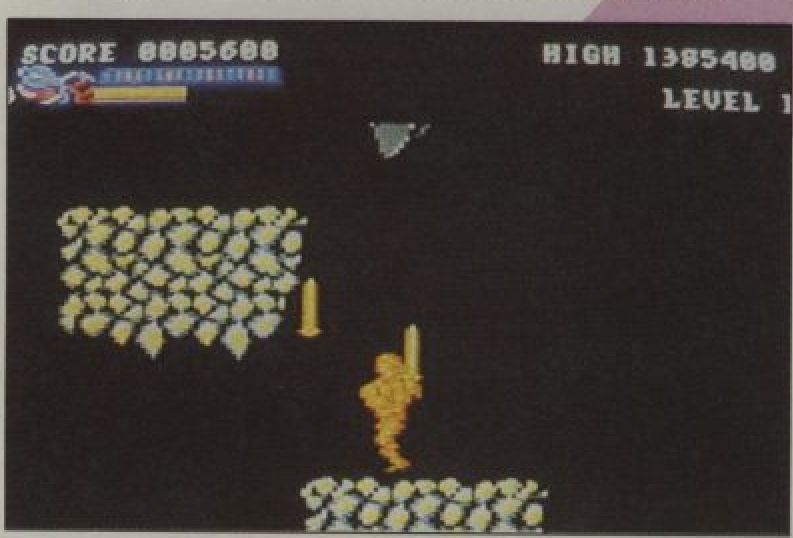
Rastan Saga was one of the coin-op hits of last year and definitely high up on my list of personal favourites.

Something strange has happened in the conversion of the game to the home systems – it's lost the 'saga' out of its title. Programmer John Megan explains "It's to do with the different versions of the game that have been released around the world. The game is called *Rastan Saga* in the USA and includes a feature where bats are released to administer speedy death if the warrior hangs around too long." The Ocean version is licensed from the Japanese manufactured Taito original and does not punish you with bats if you dilly dally. It's no push over though and there are bats a-plenty in certain of the caves and caverns.

If you have not tried this game in the arcades let me describe it to you. Imagine the sword-wielding scraps in Palace's Barbarian, throw in a chunk of Montyesque platform puzzles, and a large measure of arcade action – collecting and using various weapons and planning your route.

The game is an accurate copy of the coin-op in that it is divided up into six levels – each of these levels being in two





parts and of a progressively difficult standard.

Like all warrior games there is a story which tells of evil doings and super heroes; giving the nasties a right good going over and restoring peace and tranquillity to a once-troubled land.

You play the part of Rastan the warrior king who must confront the evil wizard Karg who has unleashed hordes of monsters on the land. When you finally come face to face with Karg he assumes the awful appearance of a multi-headed dragon. To slay him, each head has to be individually lopped off. Not easy – take it from me.



N SAGA

GAME OF THE MONTH C+VG

C+VG REVIEWS 2







Level One starts you off on a nice 'n' easy, flat, rocky terrain – where you can see the nasties edging slowly towards you from afar – allowing plenty of time to swing your sword out and waste them before they can get too close. This does not last for long though, as you soon find you have to climb up ropes, swing across caverns and hop from ledge to ledge if you are to get the fireball sword, hidden somewhere in this level.

Things get harder in the forests of **Level Two** where you are likely to make your first encounter with some of the nastier nasties. Prominent amongst these is the winged man who attacks when you are attempting to cross a river by hopping from raft to raft as the water bobs up and down. As with all the levels there is a second stage set in the palace of Karg – which must be completed before the next level loads. Yes, it is multi load, but there is no other way this huge arcade adventure could be converted. Disk versions will load the various levels automatically.

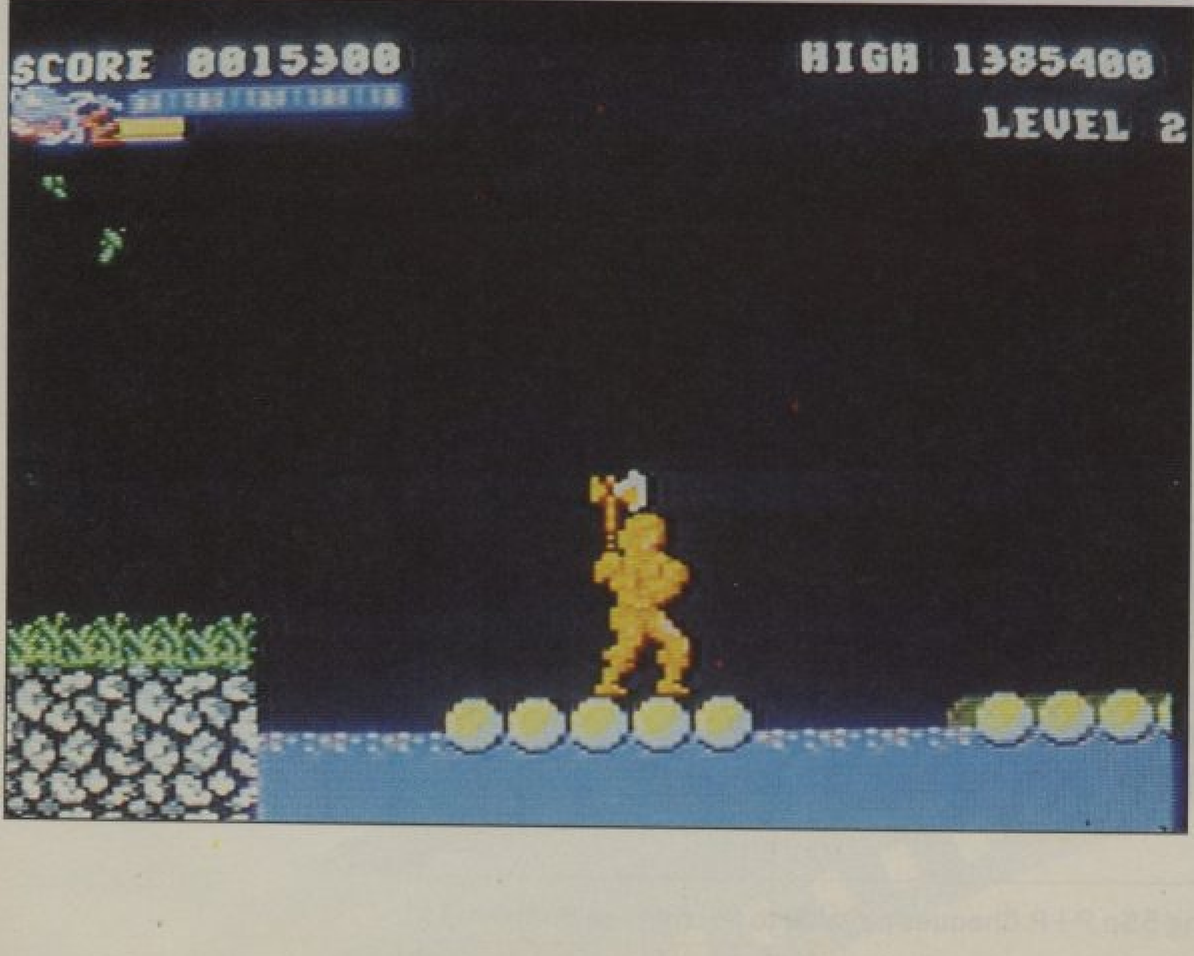
If you get to **Level Three** you will have noticed the similarity of the levels in terms of layout. This is entirely consistent with the original coin-op but, none the less, introduces an element of repetitiveness that spoils *Rastan* slightly.

Level Four is where you start to wonder if you are ever going to complete the game. The nasties are ganging up and attacking in waves. Larger, tougher, baddies come at you – like the Gigas and Chimeras.

The second part of **Level Five** offers a welcome change in background graphics with caverns rather than castle ramparts. Stalagmites 'n' tites stab the air and ground and you also have to lop off the head of a giant dragon at the end of this level. Killing this mother is tough enough, but nothing by comparison with the multi-headed monster that awaits you on **Level Six**.

Gargoyles and fire-breathing dragons will try to thwart you in meeting Karg head-on in his multi-headed dragon guise. You will need all of the combat skills that you have mastered in previous levels if you are to win this one, and read the congratulatory message at the end of the game.

John Megan's interpretation of Rastan is a competent rendition, incorporating most of the games' map. The real problem with the conversion is that the graphics just fail to impress in the way they stunned in the arcades. As it is, it's just another good coin-op conversion and the game genuinely deserves better.



▶ GRAPHICS	6
▶ SOUND	6
▶ VALUE	7
▶ PLAYABILITY	7


THE ACTION—SIMULATION
AIRBORNE
RANGER
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STAR WARS

- **MACHINES: ATARI ST, SPECTRUM, COMMODORE 64, AMSTRAD CPC RANGE, BBC (INC. ELECTRON AND MASTER).**
- **SUPPLIER: DOMARK**
- **PRICE: £19.95 (ST)**
- **VERSION TESTED: ATARI ST**
- **REVIEWER: DAVID**

Classic film, classic coin-op, classic game – that's *Star Wars*.

There can be very few of you reading this, that have not either seen Star Wars the movie, or played Star Wars the coin-op. Even today, with all the technical and graphical breakthroughs that have been made during the four years since the coin-op appeared, it still remains a classic and is regarded by many as the best game ever to grace an arcade hall.

Now, as the film says, the story continues with the release of *Star Wars* the computer game.

The first version to be launched (no pun intended) is for the Atari ST, and what a little cracker it is! Who says that vector-graphics are dated.

If you own an ST and loved the coin-op then what are you waiting for? Go out and bag a copy now. If you really haven't played the original, then read on. . . both of you!

With the Empire's forces closing in for the kill, Luke Skywalker, a young fighter pilot, is the Rebel's only hope of survival. The Empire can only be defeated by destroying the Deathstar, a gigantic man-made planet, which is about to blow the rebel's home planet out of existence.

Although Darth Vader, leader of the Rebel forces, believes the Deathstar to be indestructible, the rebel's computers have unearthed the one weak spot in its design, an exhaust duct leading right to its core.

As Luke Skywalker, your aim is to get a shot at the duct, but first you must annihilate a handful of Empire fighters, destroy the planet's ground-based laser towers and bunkers, and, finally, fly along the heavily guarded trench that surrounds the Deathstar.

At the end of the trench lies the exhaust port. The Deathstar can only be destroyed by planting a proton torpedo in the port as you zoom over it at high speed while, at the same time, using vast quantities of 'The Force' to avoid laser cannon fire and the horizontal barriers that lie in your path.

Miss your target, and you are faced with the unenviable task of staying alive for a second complete circuit of the Deathstar before getting another shot at the port. If you hit the spot, however, you can sit back and enjoy the sight of the Deathstar exploding into a thousand little bits, and then its back to base for another bout of Empire bashing before tea.

Throughout, the game has been well coded, with great attention to detail. Consequently it captures the frenetic mood and perfect playability of the original right down to the digitised speech and sounds in all the right places.

The sad thing about Star Wars is the disappointment of the eight bit versions.

The 64 version gets close to it but fails to really simulate the feel of the coin-op. Sure, this is probably in part due to the sluggishness of the 64 in producing 3D vector graphics – BUT, however you cut it, *Star Wars* is not going to rank as one of the 64's best coin-op conversions this year.

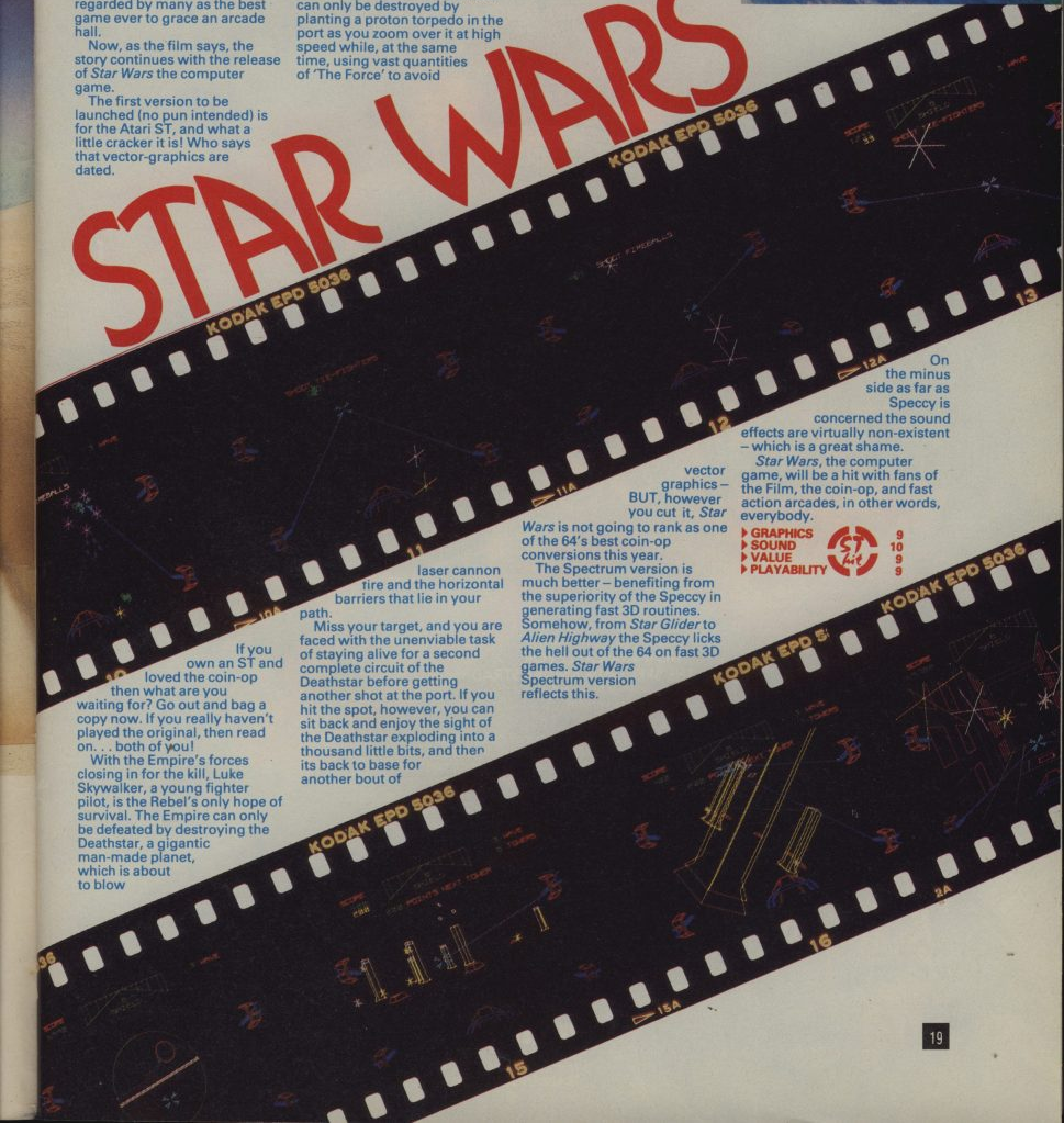
The Spectrum version is much better – benefiting from the superiority of the Speccy in generating fast 3D routines. Somehow, from *Star Glider* to *Alien Highway* the Speccy licks the hell out of the 64 on fast 3D games. *Star Wars* Spectrum version reflects this.

On the minus side as far as Speccy is concerned the sound effects are virtually non-existent – which is a great shame.

Star Wars, the computer game, will be a hit with fans of the Film, the coin-op, and fast action arcades, in other words, everybody.

GRAPHICS	9
SOUND	10
VALUE	9
PLAYABILITY	9

ST hit





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KNIGHTMARE

4

▸ **MACHINES: CBM 64/SPECTRUM**
▸ **SUPPLIER: ACTIVISION**
▸ **PRICE: BM64+SPEC £9.99**
▸ **VERSION TESTED: CBM 64/ SPECTRUM**
▸ **REVIEWER: PAUL**

Television and computer games rarely mix. It seems that the ancients who control the airwaves are totally ignorant about the millions of people who play computer games.

So when *Knightmare* the television programme surfaced last year the event was no less than staggering. For the first time the elements of live role-playing, adventure games, stunningly brilliant computer graphics and television and being skilfully blended into a highly entertaining show. The team behind it, including game designer Tim Child, should be congratulated. And Anglia TV deserves a pat on the back for having the guts to go for it.

Now Activision's game of a game show is out. The television formula has been adapted into more of a straightforward arcade adventure.

You play a knight placed in the dungeons of Damonia Castle. The aim is explore, survive and escape.

In the television programme the Dungeon Master, Treguard, would appear at various times to guide the adventuring knight with clues, hints and help. He also appears in the game to monitor your progress.

As your knight moves through the dungeons – a nice feature here is that each screen flips over like the pages of a book – encountering various inhabitants, oracles, one good, one bad, guards, puzzles etc. You can use word commands to communicate with those you encounter. Also to pick up, drop and use things. Your knight's lifeforce is shown by a burning candle on the edge of the screen.

On the Knight's travel you can also attain magical powers which allow you to indulge in a little Spellcasting.

These spells are:

Anvil – This hovers in the air until it is commanded to fall and crush.

Caspar – This is a key which opens certain doors in the castle.

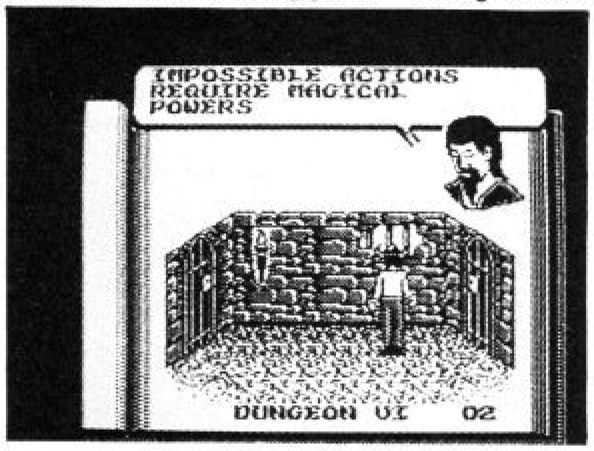
Alchemy – This spell turns people into gold spheres which can be collected as treasure.

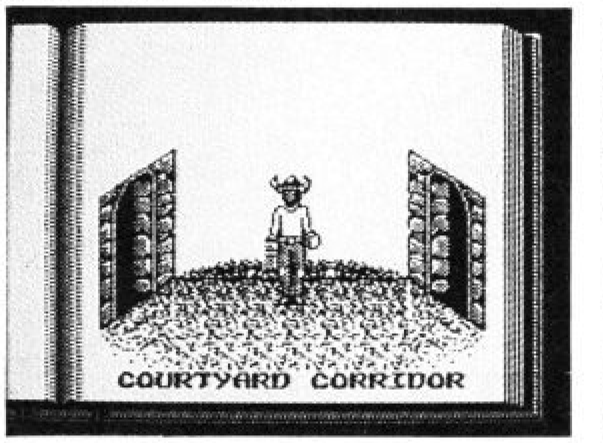
Ice – This spell does what its name implies – turns people into toads.

Metamorph – Changes characters into other beings.

It's also possible to engage your knight in a little bit of combat. But don't expect *Barbarian*-style action. All you have to do is move next to the character who is the object of your aggression and hit fire repeatedly for the battle to commence.

Arcade adventurers everywhere should find *Knightmare* a thoroughly enjoyable game. I know I did.





▸ **GRAPHICS**	**8**
▸ **SOUND**	**8**
▸ **VALUE**	**8**
▸ **PLAYABILITY**	**9**

C+VG HIT!

MATCHDAY II

C+VG HIT!

▸ **MACHINES: SPECTRUM/ AMSTRAD**
▸ **SUPPLIER: OCEAN**
▸ **PRICE: £9.95**
▸ **VERSION TESTED: SPECTRUM**
▸ **REVIEWER: PAUL**

Stand by for an outbreak of tough matches in the football game stakes. The market is about to be blitzed by them. First we've got Jon Ritman's *Matchday II*, then *Football Manager II, Gary Lineker's Super Star Soccer*, a Peter Beardsley game on the way and, of course, the re-release of *Peter Shilton's Handball Maradona*.

So if you're out to score with a footie game there's plenty of choice.

Matchday II comes highly recommended. It has taken *Matchday* as a basis to build on, and the improvements are worthwhile.

So what do you get? It's a one or two player soccer simulation which allows you to volley, lob, backheel and kick ground shots with varying degrees of strength. You can also jump, head the ball and barge other players.

There is also a league championship and cup competition for good measure. And if you're running a league or cup competition up to seven people can take part.

Matches can last for 10, 20 or 30 minutes so you can fit quite a lot into a couple of hours play.

Control of members of your team automatically switches to the person nearest the ball.

The kickometer shown at the top of the screen and above the player's head determines the kick pressure. III is very hard, II is medium, I is very soft and -I is a backheel.

You take corners, throws, corners goalkicks, and intercept a pass.

The game also includes something called the diamond deflection system. This adds realism to the way a ball deflects off a player.

In practice the ball responds not only to the angle the player is standing and the ball direction, but also to the direction he is moving, including if he is jumping, and also detects his forehead for extra control.

▸ **GRAPHICS**	**8**
▸ **SOUND**	**8**
▸ **VALUE**	**9**
▸ **PLAYABILITY**	**10**



● SPECTRUM VERSION

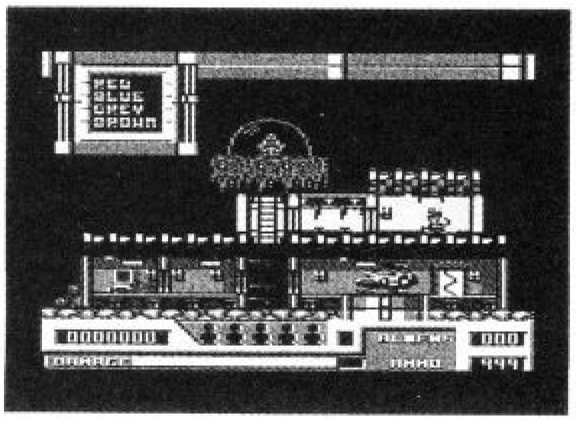


● COMMODORE VERSION

C+VG REVIEWS

5

RISK



▸ MACHINE: CBM64/128
▸ SUPPLIER: THE EDGE
▸ PRICE: £8.95 CASS/£12.95 DISK
▸ REVIEWER: JOHN

How could The Edge ever improve on its fabulous *Shadow Skimmer*? That's the question I asked when RISK was delivered into my hands. I admit I expected to be disappointed.

My fears were, thankfully, unfounded but only because RISK is a superbly different game rather than a technically superb piece of software.

Come closer and let me explain.

You play a RISK – Rapid Intercept, Seek and Kill – operative, the suicidal kind of person who's called in by Galactic Command to solve problems where all else has failed. This time the mission takes you to Christon 3, on whose surface is an important Space Weapons Research Establishment. They've obviously been watching too many Star Trek films because they've put in an SOS claiming that they're under attack from unidentified alien craft.

Galactic Command has ordered the scientists to leave the base and scatter on the planet's surface, ready for a rescue ship to pick them up, but since the command was issued no further communications from Christon 3 have been received. The surface of the planet is volcanic, mountainous and – naturally – unexplored. The research establishment is underground and connected to the planet surface – via a construct called The Tube. Your primary objective is to destroy all the aliens on the planet but you must also rescue as many scientists as possible and enter the underground complex to retrieve ammo, experimental weapons parts and the blueprints of a new super weapon.

You start the op on home base where you can use the command computers to set up the Commodore's display and sound capabilities. Once that's done, stand in front of your ship and press FIRE. You've taken to the map room where you decide which sector of Christon 3 you'll investigate first.

It's a big place, so keep a note of where you've already been, and many sectors on the map are uncharted. It's also your job to fill the map's banks by flying into the uncharted area, destroying and exploring. When you've completed that section it'll be added to your chart.

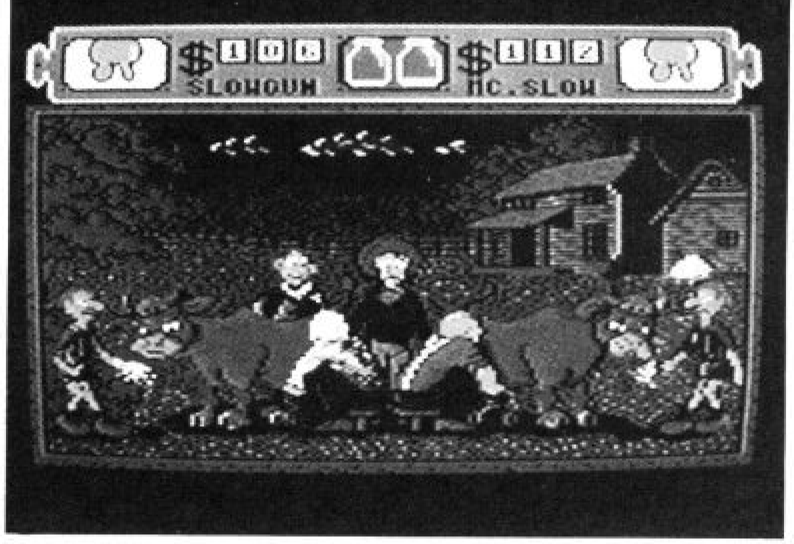
You launch into each sector from a mini-pad which'll restock your ammo and repair your damage every time you land on it. Sounds useful, but when you're in combat with an alien fighter it's difficult to break off and return to base.

I've always thought that The Edge had some of the most creative and imaginative people in the software industry and *RISK* proves me right. Every detail has been well worked out, there's little repetition on the planet's surface and the ships – both friend and foe – are finely detailed. Added to that the action is all you could wish for in an arcade game and there's little sign of characteristic Commodore jerkiness.

▸ GRAPHICS	8
▸ SOUND	7
▸ VALUE	9
▸ PLAYABILITY	9

WESTERN GAMES

▸ MACHINES: AMSTRAD CPC, ATARI ST
▸ SUPPLIER: MICROBYTES
▸ PRICE: £9.99 CASS/£14.99 DISK
▸ VERSION TESTED: AMSTRAD
▸ REVIEWER: JOHN



Those John Wayne westerns on the box have always failed to show one important aspect of a cowboy's life. Sure, there's gunslinging, cattle rustling, gunslinging, fighting Indians, gunslinging and robbing stagecoaches, but what happens when the sun sets and the dollars run out?

Microbytes has come up with the answer, 100 years after most cowboys hung up their horses, and has converted those *Western Games* onto the computer. Your host in this Yank version of the Highland Games is a uni-toothed old-timer called Tottle. He pops up in the instructions to give you skill clues for each of the six games – and are they weird with a capital everything.

The games are rough and, to spare you none of the embarrassment involved in competing each event is displayed in glorious high-res technicolour which may not be surprising on the ST but is some achievement on the CPC. Only a few parts of each display are required to move, though, so perhaps the feat isn't too miraculous.

First up you've got arm wrestling – but not your milksopping Brit version. The contests held over a candle so the first arm that hits the deck gets cooked into the bargain.

Two human players can take part – as in all the games – but if you decide to take sides against the computer instead, be careful. Its player has been known to use two arms when referee Beanpole Fred nods off to sleep, as he often does.

Arm wrestling's all about strength and you get yours by waiting for the arm on the status display to enter a strong phase. When you think it's as strong as it's going to get pull back on the joystick so that, hopefully, the match and your arm goes in the right direction.

Beershooting's next, and it's about as hazardous as heavy drinking. The bottles are held by the village idiots, and don't forget murder's a hanging offence, even if it's in play.

The idea is to hit five bottles with bullets faster than your opponent – yep, it's fast draw by any other name. The longer you take to draw the more nervous you become. Your gun hand starts shaking until you risk missing the target when you pull your trigger.

Your opponent is not a little drunk so you can wait and see if he misses before calmly drawing your weapon, but make sure you hit all five bottles or you'll have to start the round again and the computer rarely misses twice, even when he's supposed to get as nervous as you.

Dancing is reduced to a lout's pastime in this game. The idea's to keep in step and time with your partner.

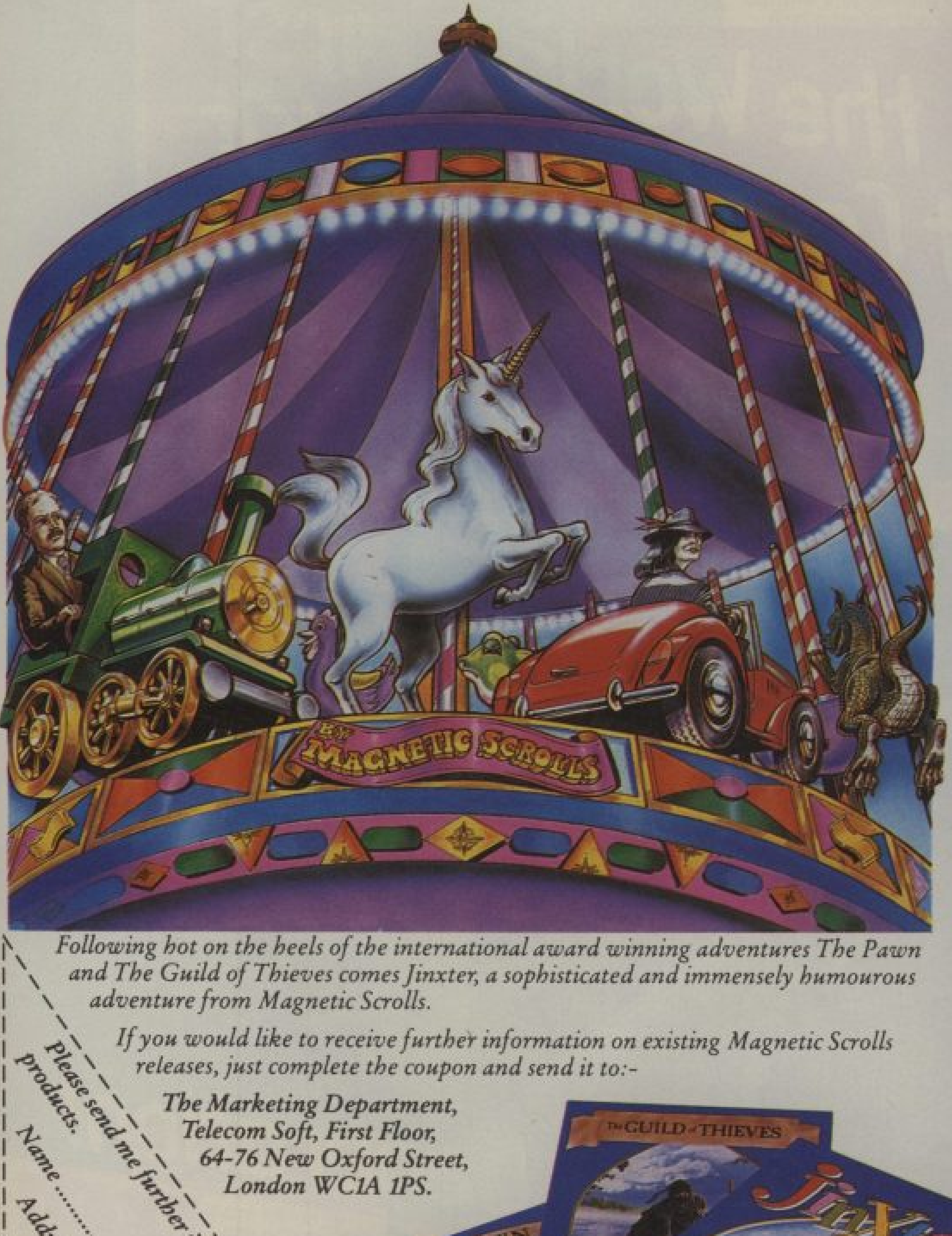
Baccy-spitting? Yuk! I refuse to partake of this game. Ah, is this a six-shooter I see before me? Well, Okay, I'll have a go. I've been taught the technique of spitting tobacco into a pot by one of the best – Tottle. First, bite off a quid of baccy, chew it for a while, set the angle of spit, set the strength of spit and lob it.

Finally, thank the great cattle gods, the Milking contest is good for a laugh. You have a milk can to fill and to do it, squeezing on those udders, you've got to match your joystick pumping action with the throb of the udder indicator in the status panel.

Well, I'm thoroughly disgusted. My jaws ache, my trigger finger's all but dropped off and my wrist's seized up, but still I enjoyed this unique game.

▸ GRAPHICS	8
▸ SOUND	7
▸ VALUE	8
▸ PLAYABILITY	8

JinXter



Oh No – Not Another Magnetic Scrolls Adventure . . .

Yup. Sorry. The team that gave you *The Pawn* and *The Guild of Thieves* weren't satisfied with international acclaim, the best graphics in the business, and a parser so smart it'll understand every word even *you* type.

"Let's improve the system," they said, "Let's do *even better* graphics," they said. "Let's have a crazy fairground and a cloud that thinks it's a World War II fighter pilot, and a peculiar bloke in a herringbone overcoat, and a railway disaster, and a plot to destroy civilization. Oh yes — let's not forget the World's Strongest Beer. Right?"

"No," we said, "calm down. Take it easy." But would they listen?

Jinxter. Maybe *now* they'll be satisfied . . .

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*Text Only.

Magnetic Scrolls

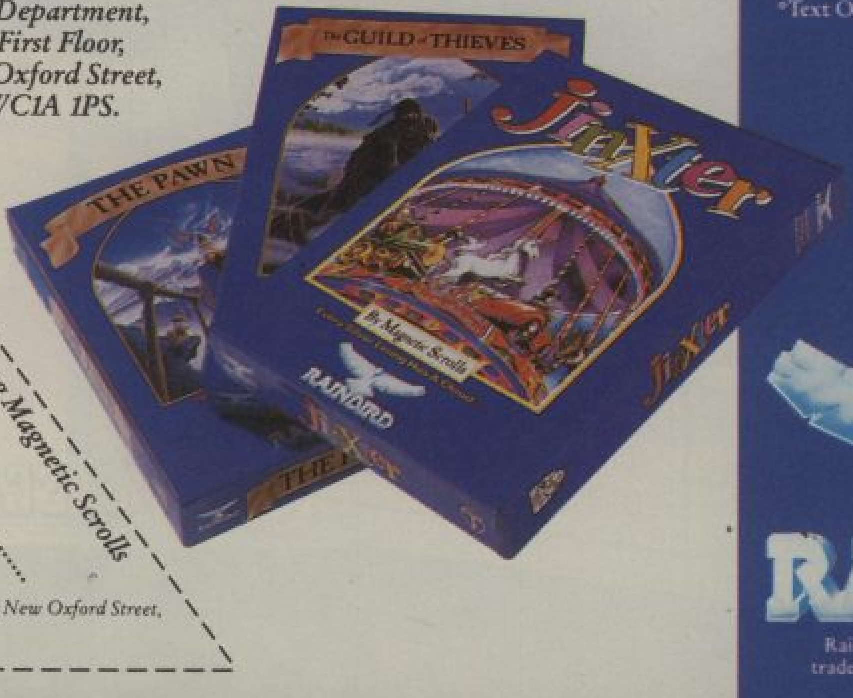
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▶ MACHINE: CBM 64/AMSTRAD/SPECTRUM/ATARI ST
▶ SUPPLIER: US GOLD
▶ PRICE: CBM 64 (£9.99/£11.99)/SPECTRUM (£8.99)/AMSTRAD (£11.99/£14.99)/ATARI ST (£19.99)
▶ VERSION TESTED: CBM 64/AMSTRAD
▶ REVIEWER: PAUL

OUT RUN

Out Run, perhaps the ultimate coin-op driving game for speed, spills and thrills. It's a winner, the thoroughbred of the arcades.

There's little doubt in most people's minds that the US Gold conversion will hit the number one spot. But at the time of writing that's still in the future.

But one thing is for certain. If you are expecting the conversion to be as good as the arcade marvel you'll be in for a disappointment. What you get is really an approximation.

Despite the claim that *Out Run* has taken, "nine months for numerous programmers to develop the graphic design and game play," there is the impression that the Commodore 64 version has been rushed.

The game is a race against time, to complete the selected course and reach any of the five goal lines to become a winner.

Out Run puts you in the seat of a Ferrari Testarossa Convertible, capable of a 185 mph top speed. A real one would set you back a cool £85,000.

On the road to victory you must also avoid obstacles and collisions. If you run off the road, your girl, who appears to be dark-haired rather than blonde, as in the arcade version, turns and appears to slap you. If the crash is more severe, you both end up sitting stunned on the verge and she points an accusing finger at you.

There are two gears – high and low – which can be used to accelerate, decelerate and manoeuvre through the curves. In principle you select low gear to get through curves and high gears to bomb down the straights.

Points are scored for driving well but if you fail to complete the course within the time limit, you are disqualified and it's back to the start. You can choose to follow any of the five courses, each with different scenery.

The graphics are rather blocky, especially the roadside buildings and crowds. The lines across the lower half of the CBM version, I found really annoying. But the sound and music are really great.

But when it comes down to it, a driving simulation must be drivable. And that's where I felt it was lacking. For too much of the time I felt I was out of control and getting nowhere.

And now for the Amstrad version. What can I say? Words such as travesty leap to mind. Surely there's some mistake. This isn't the *Out Run* we know and love. This is something else, something indefinable, something which wants to make you scream and bang your head against the nearest solid object, something you will regret spending money on.

It's a nightmare to load and a nightmare to play. The sound is appalling. When you skid it sounds like a strained seagull and if you hit anything the sound is – how can I put it? – unacceptable in socially polite circles. The graphics fail to impress. At one stage I was hurtling along at more than 200 KHM and had the distinct impression that I was going backwards.

If you are really determined to get a copy for your Amstrad, please, please, please ask for a demonstration before you play it. It could save you a lot heartache.

	CBM	AM
▶ GRAPHICS	5	4
▶ SOUND	9	1
▶ VALUE	5	1
▶ PLAYABILITY	5	2



GRYZOR

▶ MACHINES: AMSTRAD/ SPECTRUM/CBM 64
▶ SUPPLIER: OCEAN
▶ PRICE: SPECTRUM (£7.95/£14.95 PLUS 3 DISK)/AMSTRAD (£9.95 CASS/ £14.95 DISK)/CBM 64 (£8.95 CASS/£14.95 DISK)
▶ VERSIONS TESTED: AMSTRAD/ SPECTRUM
▶ REVIEWER: PAUL

Welcome Lance Gryzor, straight from the Arnie S. clone zone, all muscles, murder and mayhem. And get a load of his weapons! All of them designed to take an alien's head off with ease.

Coin-op fans will already know what's in store with this Konami conversion – Action with a capital A.

And to be honest I haven't enjoyed a straight a shoot 'em up so much since Elite's *Ikari Warriors*.

So let't get down and get with it.

Alien creatures called the Durrs from the planet Suna have somehow infiltrated the earth's defences and set up their HQ and created an APP – Atmosphere Processing Plant. This fiendish device is capable of controlling the weather and the idea is to bring about another ice age.

Step forward man mountain Gryzor. His mission is to put the heat on the Durrs and stop the big freeze. And to do that he must infiltrate the complex, collect weapons, destroying guards until – or rather if – he manages to reach the centre of mischief.

The game play is split into three sections, each of which is loaded automatically when a level is completed.

The first section consists of three scenes, in which Gryzor, initially equipped with a machine gun, blasts his way along a three tier-scrolling landscape, avoiding the guards, taking out machine gun, nests and hopefully collecting extra weapons. The first scene ends with you blasting through a wall. The next section involves



threading your way through tunnels to a control room. The final bit of this section is the destruction of the control room.

The middle phase of the game is virtually a repeat of the first, only more difficult.

Finally, Gryzor reaches the APP. This final part of the game comes in two sections. First a battle through the APP to the aliens' mother-ship. And finally into the ship and then destroy it.

The weapons Gryzor can find – watch out for "weapon eagles" – are rapid fire machine gun, scatter gun with three-directional fire (I found this the most useful of weapons), laser gun and barrier which gives temporary invulnerability.

At first I thought the colourful Amstrad graphics were rather garish with everything blurring into one but this was hasty judgement and I soon got used to it. The Spectrum version is okay but suffers in comparison with the Amstrad, but it is still very playable.

This game is highly recommended. Why not start the New Year grappling with *Gryzor?*

	AMSTRAD	SPECTRUM
▶ GRAPHICS	8	7
▶ SOUND	8	5
▶ VALUE	8	8
▶ PLAYABILITY	9	9

COMBAT SCHOOL

▶ MACHINES: 64/SPECTRUM/ AMSTRAD
▶ SUPPLIER: OCEAN
▶ PRICE: COMMODORE (£8.95 CASS/£12.95 DISK)/AMSTRAD (£8.95 CASS/ £14.95 DISK)/ SPECTRUM (£7.95)
▶ VERSION TESTED: C64
▶ REVIEWER: EUGENE

When I played *Combat School* against Marillion's keyboard player at the Family Leisure Centre in Old Compton Street – oh sorry, didn't I tell you, Mark Kelly and I had a great old time of it playing the Konami game.

Not that I'm one to drop names or anything but I certainly did get an idea of just how tough a game *Combat School* is when I came up against the Marillion pop star.

Event one is the **Assault Course** which is definitely the joystick buster of the year. It's a waggler. You know the routine – shake the thing like crazy to make your soldier leg across the screen – over walls, swinging from bar to bar, and then making a mad dash for the finishing line as the clock ticks away.

The **Rifle Range** is where things start to get really tough – in fact when I played the game against Mark Kelly, who as I may have explained earlier is Marillion's keyboard player, I ran into considerable grief.

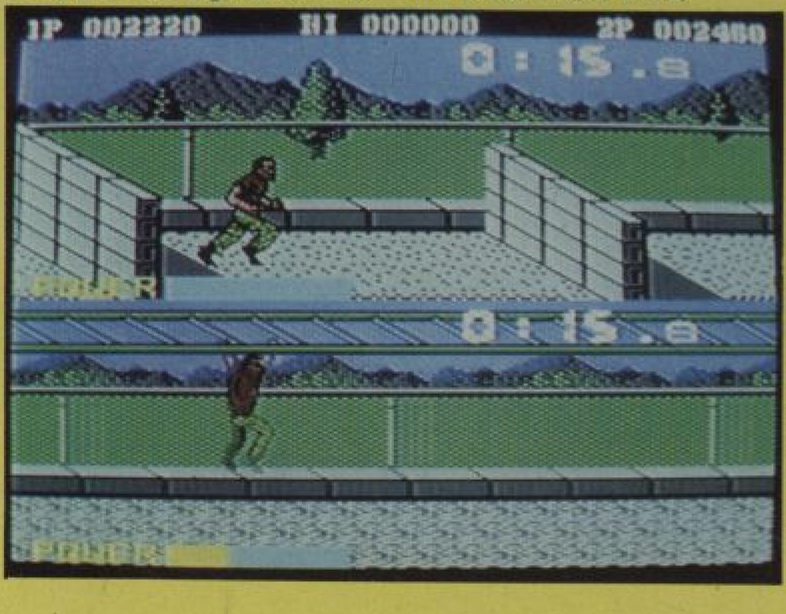
The **Arm Wrestling** event is a bit of a non event really.

The **Iron Man Race** is your second assault course, and much tougher. It too requires you to cross rivers with the aid of a canoe.

If you fork out for *Combat School* you are guaranteed several hours of fun. Possibly the best coin op conversion of the year and an extremely deserving *C+VG Hit*.

▶ GRAPHICS	8
▶ SOUND	8
▶ VALUE	9
▶ PLAYABILITY	9

C+VG HIT!





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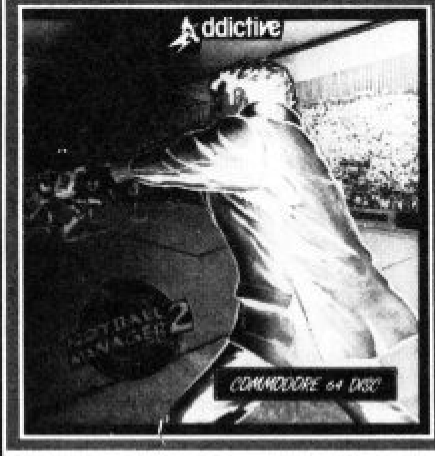
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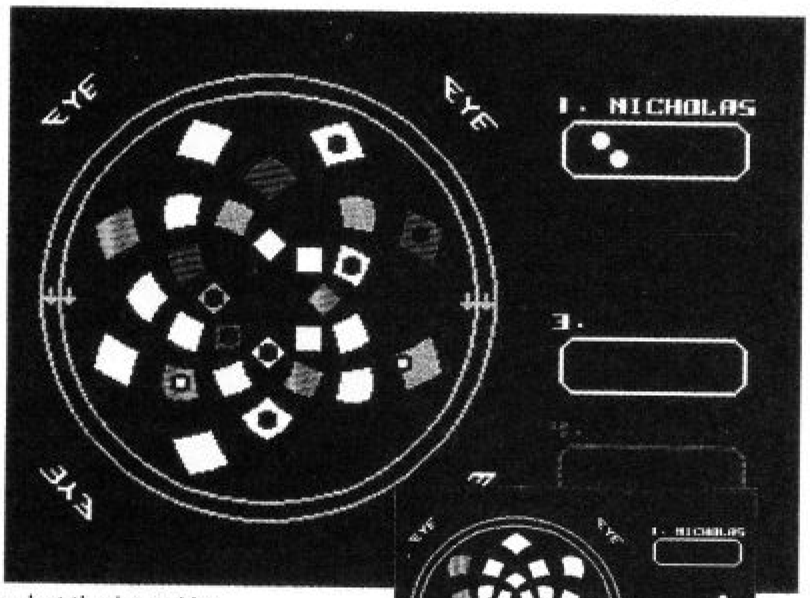
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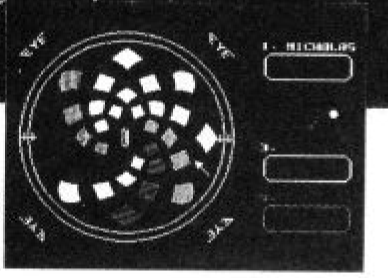
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C+VG REVIEWS

8

EYE





▶ MACHINE: CBM 64/SPECTRUM 48/128K/SPECTRUM PLUS 3/ ATARI ST/AMSTRAD
▶ SUPPLIER: ENDURANCE GAMES
▶ PRICE: £9.95 (SPECTRUM/CBM 64/ AMSTRAD CASS)/£14.95 (CBM/ AMSTRAD DISK AND ATARI ST)
▶ VERSION TESTED: CBM 64
▶ REVIEWER: PAUL

Hey, cosmic, man. Pretty colours all moving about, in ever-changing spirals. This is weird.

But stick with it because *Eye* – based on this year's big board game smash – is confusing at first sight, simple to learn once you actually start playing and has that hook, hook, hookability – to keep you playing for eons.

If you get *Eye* for Christmas – either on computer or board game – the whole family will have a fun time.

As I said before, I didn't really understand the game until I started playing and the realisation suddenly dawned. It's basically a simple idea, much easier than chess to learn, but just as complex in its endless strategies.

But before describing the aim of the game, it's best to know what the board is.

The board consists of 32 coloured squares formed by two spirals within a circle. There are 8 different colours each having four squares in view at any one time. By rotating the spirals it is possible to change the visual position of the squares of each colour. The position of the squares of each colour is called a pattern and by rotating the spirals you will notice there are four patterns, the Long spiral, the Short spiral, the Straight line and the Circle. Got it? You will, don't worry.

Also shown on the board is the player's Status box. This is used initially to indicate the number of counters to be placed by a player during set-up and afterwards to indicate "controlled colours" that a player may capture during the course of a game.

Now the object of the game is to get the required number of your counters onto the corresponding colour squares on the game board. Simple, eh?

Up to four people can play.

The winner of a two player game is the person who manages to get four of his counters onto his colour pattern on the board. Each player starts with six counters and takes it in turn to place one piece at a time onto an unoccupied square on the board.

A move is made either by moving a player's own counter to an adjacent square or by moving one of the spiral wheels clockwise or anti-clockwise. A player on their turn may move their counters and/or turn the wheel in any combination or direction up to the total number of moves allowed. A player is not allowed to place a counter on an already occupied square, nor to "jump" over occupied squares.

The rules for three or four players are much the same.

You can see the complexities that are already beginning to build from a simple idea. All that's left to say is play the game.

And don't forget to check out the packaging. It's probably the most lavish we've seen for a reasonably priced game.

There is also a book on the market which, apparently, includes all the spiral patterns that can be made on the board game. So it looks as though there's an *Eye* industry beginning to grow. We've even heard that and *Eye II* could be in the offing.

▶ GRAPHICS 8
▶ SOUND 8
▶ VALUE 10
▶ PLAYABILITY 10

C+VG HIT!

TETRIS

▶ MACHINE: ATARI ST/AMIGA/C64
▶ SUPPLIER: MIRRORSOFT
▶ PRICE: CBM 64 £8.99 (CASS)/ £12.99 (DISC)/ST/AMIGA £19.99.
▶ VERSION TESTED: COMMODORE 64 TAPE
▶ REVIEWER: DAVID

Tetris has got to be one of the most addictive games released this year. Originally programmed in Russia on the IBM, this wonderful arcade puzzler is being converted to most major 8 bit and 16 bit formats in the next couple of months.

As with many of the best games, the idea behind *Tetris* is beautifully simple. A variety of shapes appear at the top of the rectangular play area, and begin dropping to the bottom. All you have to do, is guide the shapes down so that they fit together, jigsaw-like, leaving as few gaps as possible.

Whenever a horizontal line is completely filled by shapes, it disappears, leaving just those lines with gaps. If you allow the build-up of shapes to reach the top of the play area, the game is over.

The advantages of fitting the pieces together efficiently are twofold. Firstly, although points are awarded for every piece placed, you score bonus for every completed line. Secondly, the quicker you fill up a whole line, the quicker it disappears leaving more vertical distance for other shapes to fall, giving you more time to work out where to put them.

There are seven different shapes including Ts, Ls, Is, and squares. As they drop, you can move them from side to side and rotate them until you're happy they are in the right orientation and are dropping in the right place.

As your score builds up, so does the rate at which the shapes drop down the screen. Sooner or later you will start to make mistakes leaving gaps in an ever growing shape mountain.

Of course the bigger the mountain, the less time you have to get yourself out of the mess, and before you know it, new shapes have settled on top, giving you even more of a headache.

By selecting one of the game's ten levels, you determine the initial dropping rate of the shapes, but the scoring mechanism elegantly compensates those that are brave, or stupid, enough to start on the more advanced levels, by awarding more points for each shape placed and line made. Thus it is possible for players, effectively playing with different handicaps, to compare their performances.

Tetris is nicely rounded off with an atmospheric 25 minute sound track which fits the mood of the game perfectly.

Although the game itself cannot boast amazing graphics or digitised sound effects, neither are needed and indeed would only serve as a distraction from what is a brilliant, and totally addictive game.

In fact, the boss of Broderbund, a leading US software house, has gone on record publicly as saying that turning down *Tetris* was the single biggest mistake of his commercial life. . . enough said!

Highly recommended. I wonder how many other game ideas are brewing back in the USSR!

▶ GRAPHICS 8
▶ SOUND 9
▶ VALUE 10
▶ PLAYABILITY 10

C+VG HIT!


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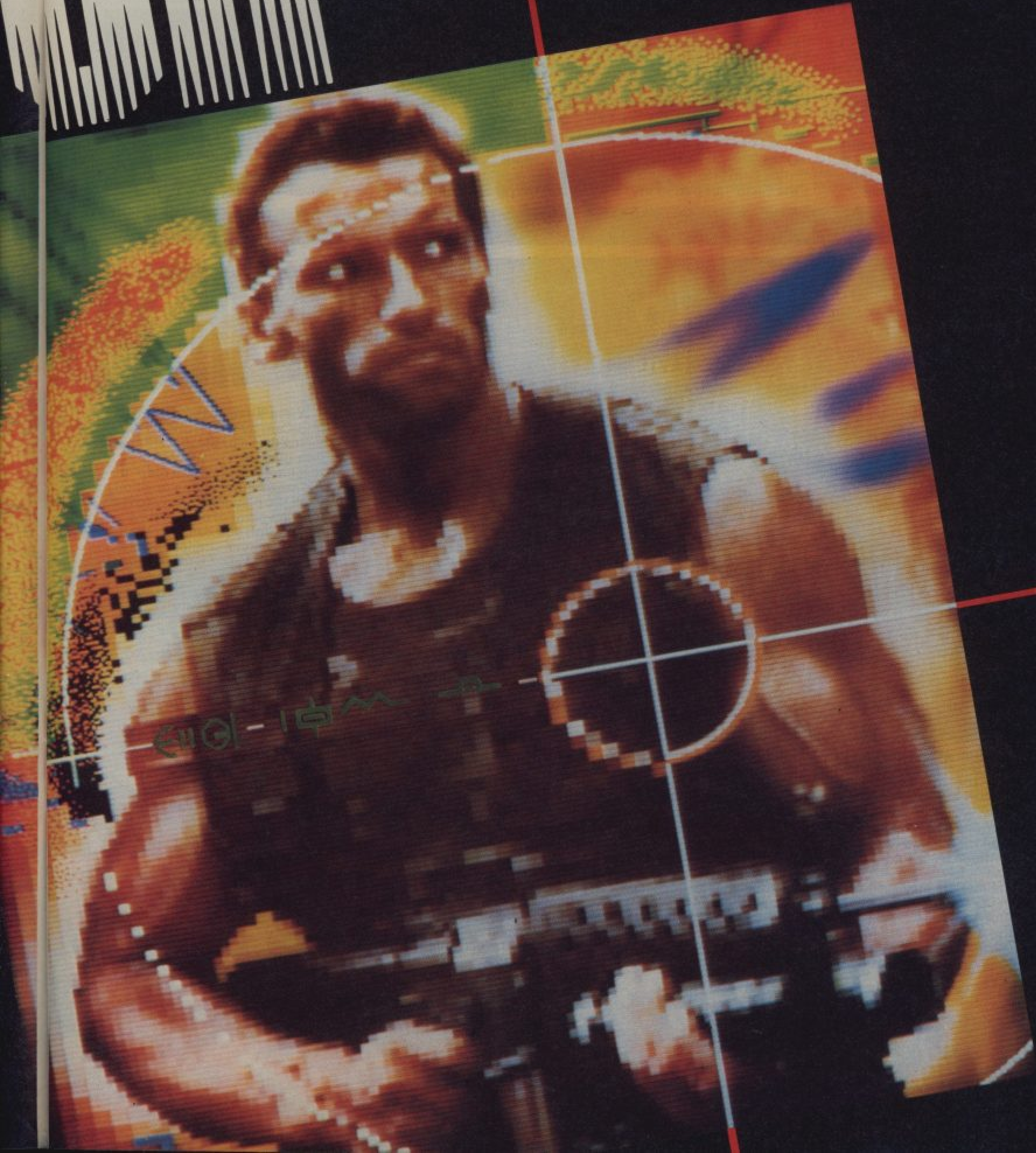
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ACTIVISION

Game concept, design and graphics by System 3.

EXPLICABLE IS GOING TO HAPPEN......



C+VG REVIEWS 9

BONE CRUNCHER

▶ MACHINE: CBM64/128
▶ SUPPLIER: SUPERIOR SOFTWARE
▶ PRICE: £11.95 (disc)
▶ REVIEWER: JOHN

Meet Bono, a friendly dragon who would make Arthur Daley proud. He lives in a seaside castle and is on to a nice little earner by making soap for the monsters who bathe in the waters around his home.

His business partner, Fozzie – who's a green elfy-thing and not a bear – will help you collect the skeletons you need to make the soap and protect you from the evil monsters which inhabit the lower reaches of the castle and could kill you during your bone-hunt . . .

Okay, that's the cute scenario finished. Now, on with the game which is a load of dross – and after seeing Superior's *Zarch* I'm surprised the company could let its standards drop so low.

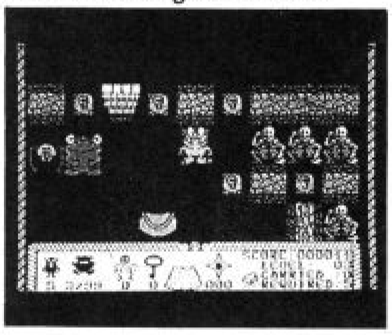
There are 22 maze sections in the castle, each one of which has a set of increasing dangers. Bono needs five skeletons to make a bar of soap in the caudron which he keeps close-by. Each castle chamber contains at least 25 skeletons and you need to make five bars of soap before you can progress to the next part of the castle. Once you've made them you must deliver your goods from the castle rampart to the bathing uglies waiting in the water below.

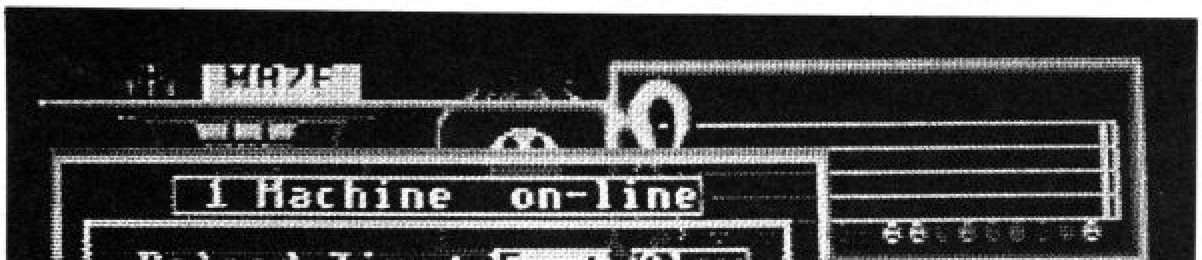
Your path through the chambers in search of bones is hampered by the most flat-faced, boldly drawn monsters I've seen since the days of low resolution BBC model A arcade games – how low you can get. The slime-slicked walls and floors are also infested by spiders, who like to eat skeletons, and Glooks, which'll follow the smell of soap but are ultimately harmless.

Glooks can be used to bait traps for the evil monsters which'll kill you on sight. Just use the bar of soap you're carrying to manipulate the Glooks and the marauding monster into a corner or against a wall. The monsters suffer from hydrophobia and, if they can't move they die.

Alternatively, you can rely on your buddie Fozzie to keep the monsters and spiders at bay. He sticks around you through thick and thin and will hold back monsters while you pass through evil-inhabited passageways. He's not invincible, though, and you may have to give him a gentle push to get him going after a monster or spider's battered him senseless.

Monsters can also be destroyed if you force them down trapdoors. Some monsters may also be trapped in the sticky castle earth, but you shouldn't leave them there because they could escape. Remove the earth and use the Glooks to bung the beastie





MIDIM

▶ MACHINE: ATARI ST
▶ SUPPLIER: HYBRID ARTS
▶ PRICE: £34.95
▶ VERSION TESTED: ATARI ST
▶ REVIEWER: CHRIS JENKINS

If you have 16 Atari STs, or sixteen friends with an ST each, then *MidiMaze* is for you. Let us explain. . .

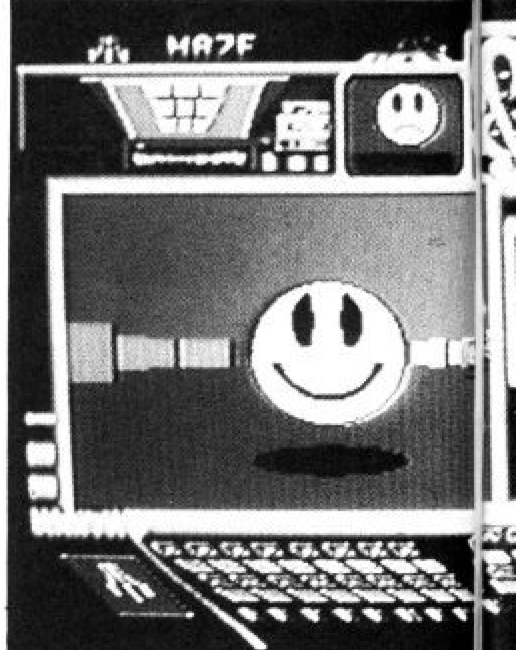
MidiMaze is the first game from US software company Hybrid Arts, best known for professional-standard MIDI music packages. Written by Xanth FX, the team responsible for the famous *Shiny Bubbles* graphics demo, *MidiMaze* is technically sophisticated, despite being based on a very old chase-around-a-three-dimensional-maze idea.

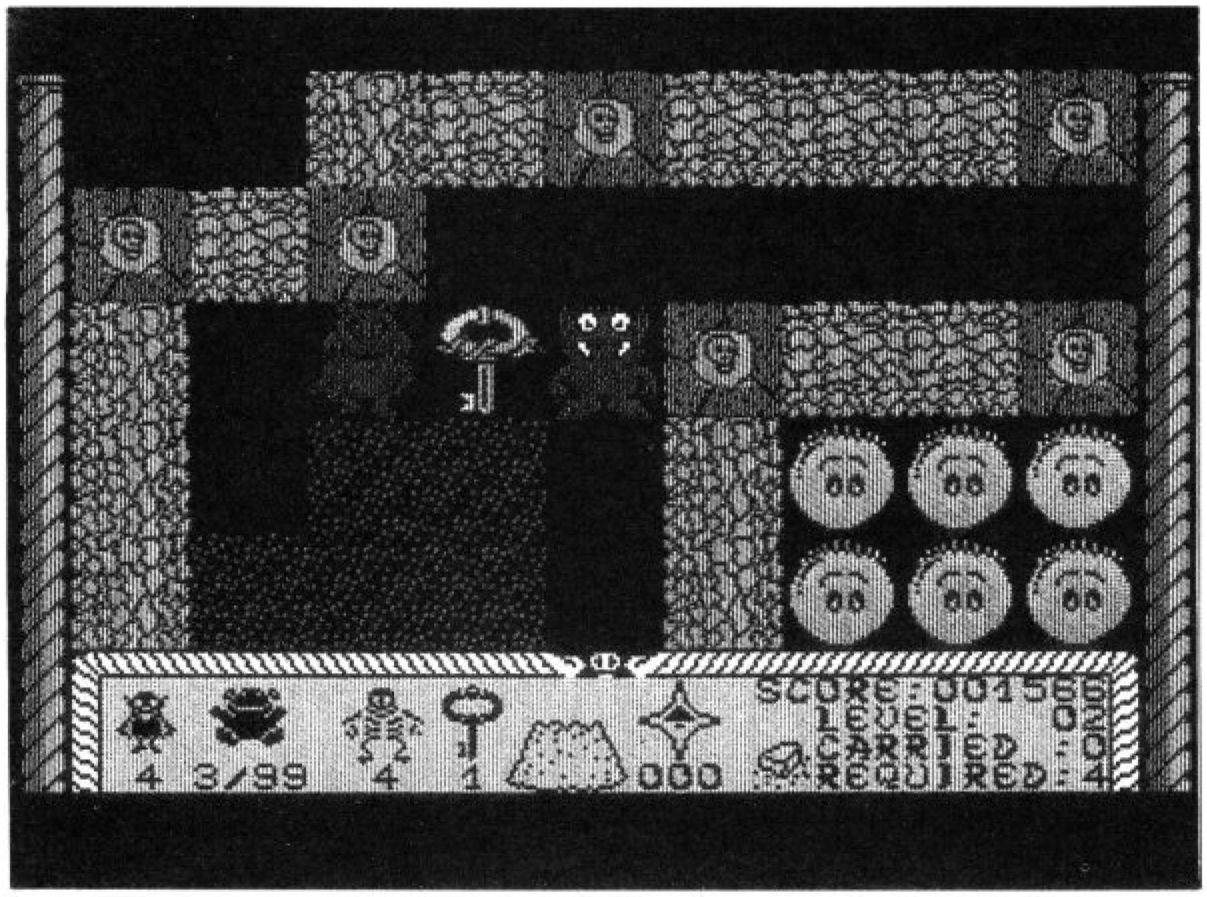
The difference in this case is that you control a homicidal Smiley Face, and your task is to hunt down and exterminate fifteen other Smileys. You can chase them through the mazes blasting away, or play a waiting game, jumping out from behind walls to ambush them or sneaking up from behind. The amount of strategy involved in the game depends largely on the skill levels set for the fifteen enemy Smileys, which can be controlled either by the computer or by another player seeing the maze from his own viewpoint on his own ST.

Up to sixteen STs can be networked together using the MIDI ports, which are usually used to control synthesisers and other electronic instruments.

There's even a facility called MidiCam by which one ST can be used as a game monitor by non-players. The MidiCam machine will display a map of the maze showing the position of all the players, and switch to the viewpoint of any Smiley.

Although you can play *MidiMaze* on a single machine,





down a trapdoor.

The most exciting part of the game package is the badly drawn cartoon on the back of the instruction leaflet. It makes up, in some ways, for the baby graphics and the antiquated BBC-Superior thinners of the game.

▶ GRAPHICS	4
▶ SOUNDS	4
▶ VALUE	4
▶ PLAYABILITY	5

MAZE

the real fun starts when you get several players together. You can even play a team game by defining groups of Smileys which cannot shoot each other.

▶ GRAPHICS	8
▶ SOUND	9
▶ VALUE	7
▶ PLAYABILITY	8



CHAMONIX CHALLENGE

- ▶ MACHINES: ATARI ST, PC, AMIGA, C64, AMSTRAD CPC RANGE
- ▶ SUPPLIER: INFOGRAMES
- ▶ PRICE: £19.95 ST, PC, AMIGA, C64, AMSTRAD CPC: £9.95 (TAPE) AND £14.95 (DISK)
- ▶ VERSION TESTED: ATARI ST
- ▶ REVIEWER: DAVID

French software designers and programmers can always be relied on to come up with games that are a little different, often devoid of any kind of violence (that makes them different from a start!), and covering subjects as diverse as water-ski-ing and blowing bubbles.

Infogrames' latest release, *Chamonix Challenge*, definitely falls into this category but, like many other games from the same stable, a little imagination and creativity has turned a potentially boring subject into an interesting simulation.

The subject in question is mountaineering, Alpine to be precise. *CC* gives you the chance pick one of six routes to the top of a mountain range. The routes vary in difficulty, each with its own set of challenges, requiring a different mix of skills and equipment.

Having chosen a route, you can also decide the season (summer or winter), and your time of departure. Both these variables affect the type of climb you can expect. Obviously, if you start at the crack of dawn, you'll get in a full days climbing before having to stop for the night. In the winter, not only will the weather be more severe, but the number of hours of daylight is also radically reduced.

There are 22 different objects used for climbing, as well as other supplies to choose from.

As in an adventure game, some objects can only be used if you have others as well. For example, there's not much point in taking a set of pitons (anchor points), unless you also have a hammer to knock them into the rock.

The screen is divided into an action window and a number of sub-windows and menus which appear at the appropriate moments. The action window shows a side-on view of the climber when on snow plains and slopes, and a 'behind the climber' view when he is on the rock face.

The joystick does different things depending on what surface you are on at the time. These include testing the integrity of the ground in front of you with an ice pick, jumping over crevasses, picking things out of the rucksack, hammering and inserting ice axes into the ice, and moving individual limbs up to a higher foothold on the rock face, and then dragging yourself up.

Much of the joystick control requires patience and thought rather than speed and dexterity, and some actions, notably climbing rock faces and ice slopes, are somewhat frustrating.

Other areas of the screen include a graphic of your sunglasses (showing a reflection of the route ahead), the temperature, time, and altitude, the state of your climber (he even shivers if you don't give him warm enough clothes), a safety guide, and a graphical display of a cable car showing the distance between you and that summit.

Other menus, such as your inventory, appear when you access parts of the screen, in this case by clicking the cursor over the rucksack.

What is good about *Chamonix Challenge* is the authenticity of the interplay between the climber, his environment, and the tools at his disposal which can, if used intelligently and correctly, be used to cope with most of the eventualities an alpine mountaineer might encounter.

Make no mistake, this is no arcade or adventure game, but a richly graphical, creatively conceived and implemented climbing simulation that will appeal to anyone interested in the sport, but may prove less than stimulating to the purist arcader.

▶ GRAPHICS	9
▶ SOUND	7
▶ VALUE	8
▶ PLAYABILITY	7

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FLYING SHARK

- MACHINES: SPECTRUM/CBM 64/ AMSTRAD/ATARI ST
- SUPPLIER: FIREBIRD
- PRICE: SPECTRUM (£7.95)/CBM/ AMSTRAD CASS and DISK (£8.95/ £12.95/£14.95)/ATARI ST (£19.95)
- VERSIONS TESTED: CBM 64/ SPECTRUM
- REVIEWER: PAUL

Taito's *Flying* Shark may be hot from the arcades but Firebird's conversion is really only lukewarm. Somehow it just fails to come alive. The shark has lost its bite.

However, if you've never played the coin-op, you won't know what you're missing.

Now it's own up time. I've never been the greatest Spectrum fan. The games have always suffered when compared to those on the Commodore 64. But I found *Flying Shark* much more playable on the Speccie than the 64. I was able to get much further into the game. Strange but true.

In both games you, as the lone pilot, take off from an aircraft carrier, armed with an endless supply of bullets and a few bombs to battle through five levels of planes, tanks, gun emplacements, patrol and battleships.





You need quick reactions to blast those pesky pilots out of the air. Hitting the space bar enables you to drop smart bombs which can wipe out a whole screen of opposition.

But you only have a limited supply, although you can pick up fresh supplies.

This game is all about scoring. By blasting the yellow squadron out of the sky you get 1000 points. Destroying the red planes you get extra firepower if you can pick up the symbol.

Wiping out the blue planes gives you the chance of an extra life.

And that's basically the game. It's ever onwards into the wide blue yonder. Finger on the fire button.

	SPEC	CBM 64
GRAPHICS	8	7
SOUND	6	7
VALUE	8	7
PLAYABILITY	8	6



GARFIELD

- GARFIELD: BIG FAT HAIRY DEAL
- MACHINES: CBM 64/SPECTRUM/ AMSTRAD/ATARI ST/AMIGA
- SUPPLIER: THE EDGE
- PRICE: SPECTRUM (£8.99) /CBM/ AMSTRAD (£9.99/£14.99) /ST/ AMIGA (£19.99)
- REVIEWER: PAUL
- VERSION TESTED: CBM 64

"Yawn. I'm getting tired," says Garfield the cat, after a lot of padding about.

I know how he feels. I keep waiting for the game to show its claws and see the fur fly but all I seem to get is "dum -de-dum-de-dum" or the occasional "Arrooo."

The *Garfield* industry, based on the creation of American cartoonist Jim Davis's huge – cartoons, toys, mugs, cups etc, etc, and now computer games.

And the game you get is graphically excellent, beautifully drawn cartoon characters, superbly and smoothly animated. I know nothing about *Garfield* or what he's about but The Edge programmers have given him a cutely roguish manner which is quite attractive.

It's an arcade adventure in which our feline hero must rescue his beloved girlfriend, Arlene, from the City Pound.

Anyway, Garfield and his pals – Odie, apparently the world's most stupid dog, and Nermal, the world's cutest cat – must find the pound.

Garfield, besides being cute, is also a bit of a fat cat and as such requires regular feeding. He has "snack attacks" which must be satisfied. He also seems to require frequent rests – hence the "Yawn. I'm getting tired," In fact, if he gets too tired, it's Game Over.

To sum up, Garfield looks good but the play is a little slow.

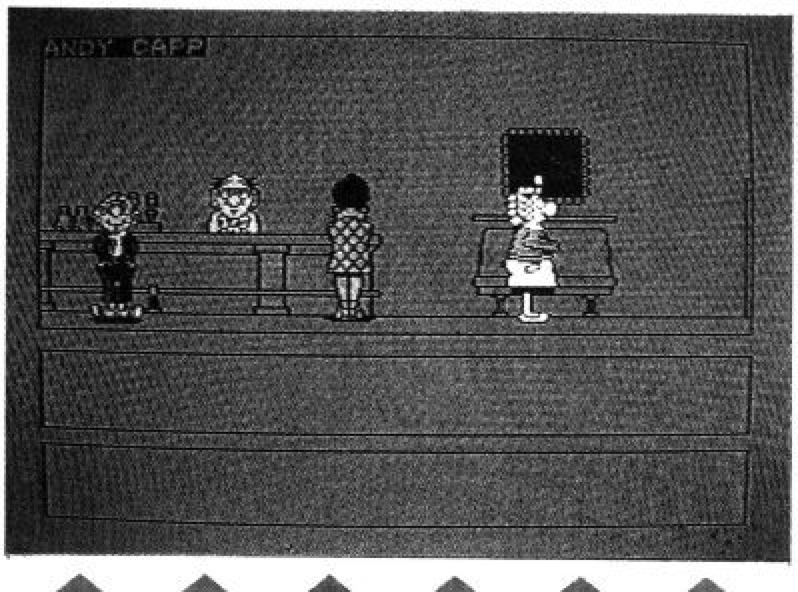
GRAPHICS	9
SOUND	8
VALUE	7
PLAYABILITY	7







C+VG REVIEWS 12



- ► MACHINES: CBM 64/SPECTRUM/ AMSTRAD
- ► SUPPLIER: MIRRORSOFT
- ► PRICE: £9.95/£12.95 (LBM 64)
- ► REVIEWER: PAUL
- ► VERSION TESTED: CBM 64

ANDY CAPP



Is this the first computer cartoon to feature wife-beating? Also husband-battering?

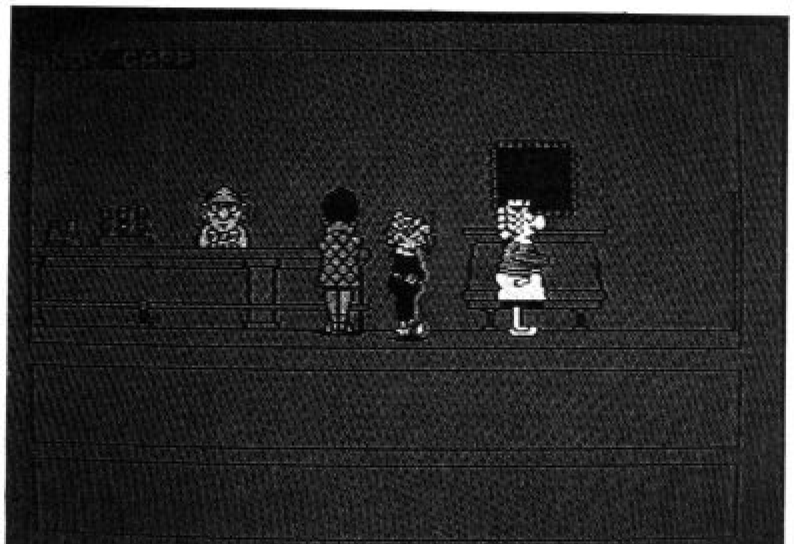
Not particularly suitable subjects for entertainment until you realise we're in the world of *Andy Capp*, star of the Daily Mirror's long-running and hugely successful cartoon strip.

In case you don't know about Andy, here's a brief character rundown. He's lazy, a skiver, a drunkard, a brawler and rotten to his long-suffering wife, Flo. Mr Nice Guy, in fact.

And that's before the game starts!

Anyway, the game opens with Andy facing a real problem – his dole-cheque has disappeared and Flo wants money.

The game is an arcade adventure in which you must steer Andy round the houses, pub, betting office, ducking and diving and wheeling and dealing. All the characters from the cartoon strip are present – Flo, Chalkie, the barman, policeman and Andy's young girlfriend.



The game is icon-controlled by joystick and four icons. These are:

Wallet: for keeping a tally of how much cash Andy has.

Speak: Andy can chat to the various people he meets and ask them questions. For example, he can quiz his mates in the pub about money and how to get it.

Fight: Andy can easily get into scraps with anybody from Flo – she sometimes wins, though, – the rentman and the policeman.

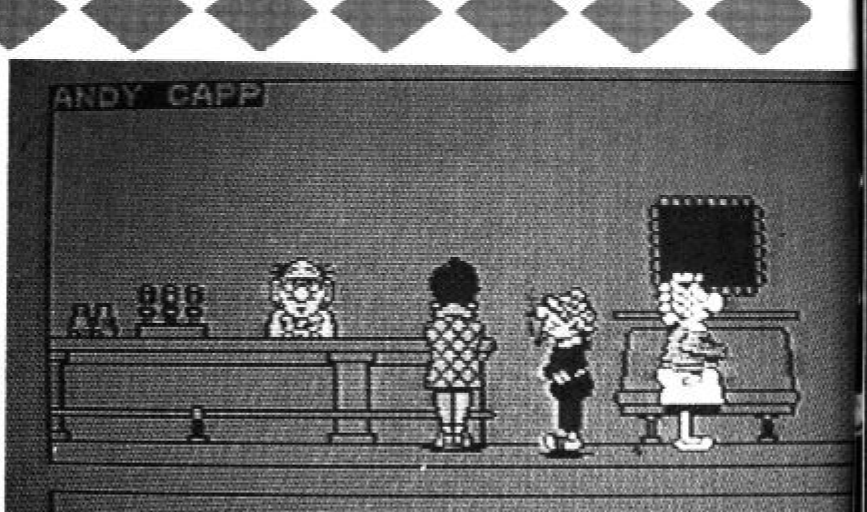
Action: This icon is used for examining objects.

The graphics are truly excellent, capturing all the characters perfectly. Despite my reservations of Andy Capp as a hero – you can even get him to steal her handbag – I quite enjoyed playing the game. Perhaps it was the slob in me coming out.

► GRAPHICS	10
► SOUND	8
► VALUE	8
► PAYABILITY	9

C+VG HIT!





WHAT THEY SAID ABOUT...

HardBall!

"An absolutely incredible sports simulation"
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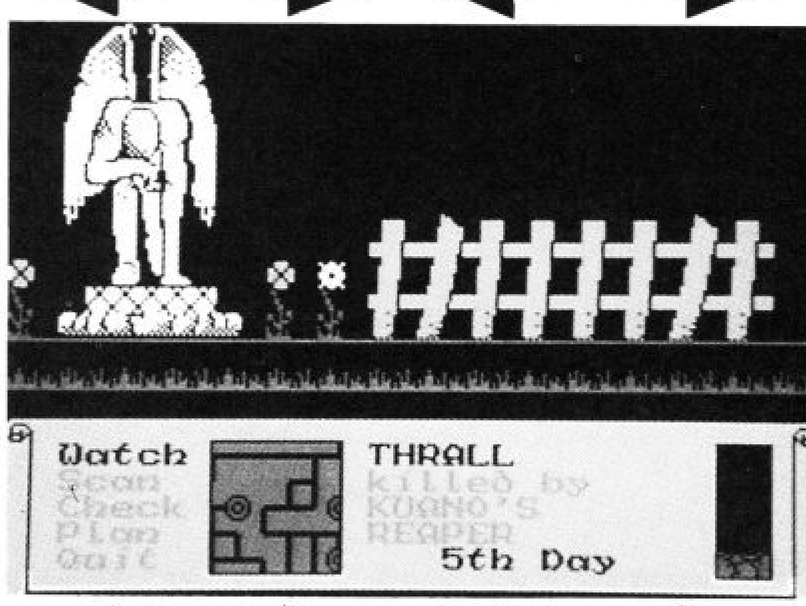
U.S. Gold, Units 2/3,
Holford Way, Holford,
Birmingham B6 7AX.
Tel: 021 356 3388

DARK SCEPTRE

▸ MACHINE: SPECTRUM
▸ SUPPLIER: BEYOND
▸ PRICE: £7.95
▸ REVIEWER: PAUL

Legend has it that Mike Singleton had written/was writing a game called *Dark Sceptre* and it was REALLY SOMETHING. At one stage screen shots even appeared of the game and then nothing. For months and months nothing was heard.

Had we imagined it? Was it all a dream? Did anybody really care anymore? And then at PCW back in September there was Mike demonstrating the game. Eventually a review copy was forthcoming. It was even scheduled for release in November but, because of C+VG's deadlines, I don't know if the game actually made it into the shelves.



So just in case you ever get a chance to buy the game, this is what you get. This is a strategy/adventure game very much in the style of what you would expect from the man who invented the brilliant *Lords of Midnight* and *Doomdark's Revenge*. The graphics are stunning for the Spectrum. The characters – and there are apparently 64 of them – are huge. The setting is the Isles of the Western Sea. Power has been lost by the Lord of the Isles to the Northmen and the lands are now under the evil influence of the Dark Sceptre.

You control a group of good guys, each with their own powers, who must gain superiority over the baddies. Meanwhile there are lots of other characters floating about who are neither good or bad. Part of the game involves trying to get the undecided onto your side.

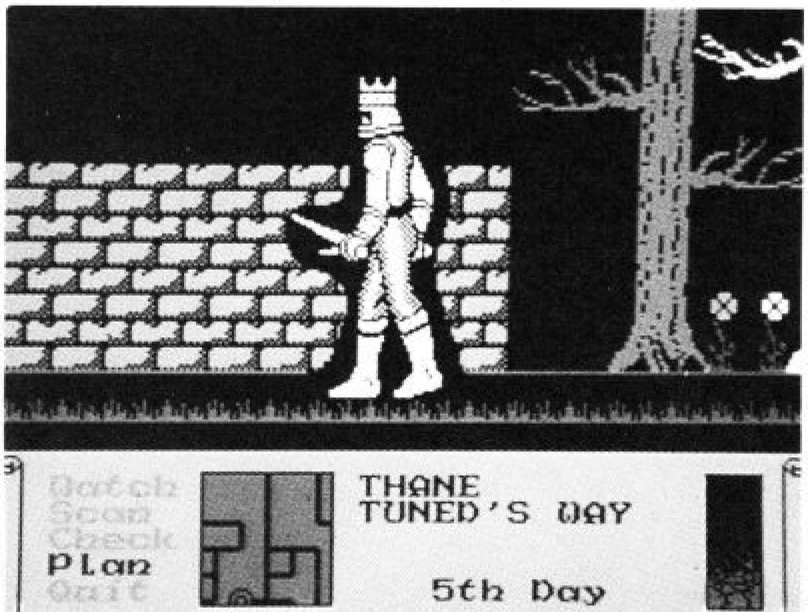
The game is controlled by joystick-selected commands (or keys) and you give members of your teams instructions to carry out. Having done this, you sit back and watch what happens, following progress on a map.

The idea is to find and Destroy the Dark Sceptre, which is hidden among the 4,000 locations in the game.

There are a huge number of commands and instructions available to you. For example, you can follow, protect, stalk, harass, avoid, find, challenge, threaten.

There are eight different types of warrior you encounter in the game, each with his own powers, strengths and weaknesses.

THANE: The commander. Without a Thane, the members of your company will be more likely to desert. MYSTIC: Mystics usually possess magical powers. HERALD: A messenger and a fighter. ASSASSIN: A hunter and a killer: REAPER: The executioner. Strikes fear into others. FOOL: A talker, not as foolish as his name suggests. SAVAGE: Wild man of the woods – tough and resilient.



THRALL: An underling, a prawn. Being simple characters, thralls do not have complex personalities. There are lots of them, though.

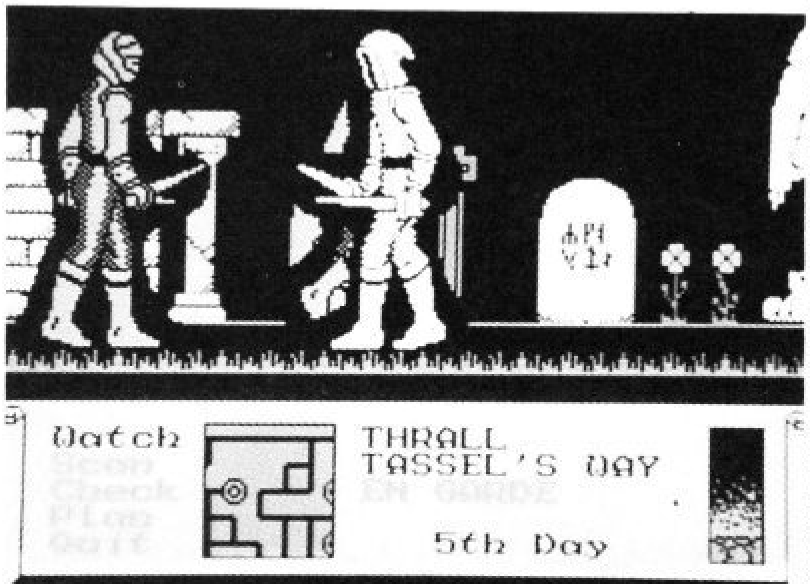
During the game, there are five control options that you can select using up/down on the joystick to highlight the option. The fire button confirms your choice. By using left and right you can change the warrior that you have currently selected.

Watch: This option allows you to watch a fight. If you hear the sound of clashing metal, then one of your warriors is engaged in battle. Press fire on this option to WATCH the fight.

Scan: This allows you to see a full map of the island, which appears in the viewing window. The positions of each of your warriors are marked in yellow on the map. The white square indicates the position of the warrior that you have currently selected.

Check: This option allows you to check the personality of the warrior you are currently watching and the last orders he was given. A summary of his personality appears in the viewing window.

Plan: This option allows you to plan your orders for the warrior that you are currently watching. A question and answer session happens in the viewing window until your orders are complete. If you select the GO TO command then the map will appear in the viewing window. You must move the cursor to the place that you want to go to (you may only select junctions) and press fire.



Dark Sceptre is certainly a challenge, and if you liked *Lords of Midnight*, you'll go for this. Was it worth the wait? We'll pass on that. . .

▸ GRAPHICS	10
▸ SOUND	5
▸ VALUE	8
▸ PLAYABILITY	8

MASK II

▸ MACHINES: SPECTRUM/CBM64/MSX/AMSTRAD
▸ SUPPLIER: GREMLIN GRAPHICS
▸ PRICE: SPECTRUM TAPE £7.99, AMSTRAD/C64/MSX TAPE £9.99, CBM 64/AMSTRAD DISC £14.99
▸ VERSION TESTED: CBM 64/AMSTRAD
▸ REVIEWER: IAN

Software companies have become obsessed with producing games that are either arcade conversions or based on comics.

After the first attempt at producing a game based on the exploits of the five Mask agents, codenames Hunter, Magic, Megabyte, Chopper and Powerkeg, Gremlin has come up with another.

But *Mask II* is not as enjoyable as the first one, and gives little reason to keep you stuck to your seat (or joystick) for a long a long time. But enough of the hypercritical comments, let's get on to the game play!

You begin at Mask H.Q. where all Venom activities are constantly under surveillance. As soon as a Venom's poisonous plot has been unmasked, you must take three of the five Mask agents to disrupt and spoil Venom's plot, if you can. Before actual confrontation with Venom's forces, you select your three appointed agents from within Boulder Hill in the Energiser Room, with the aid of the Mask computer.

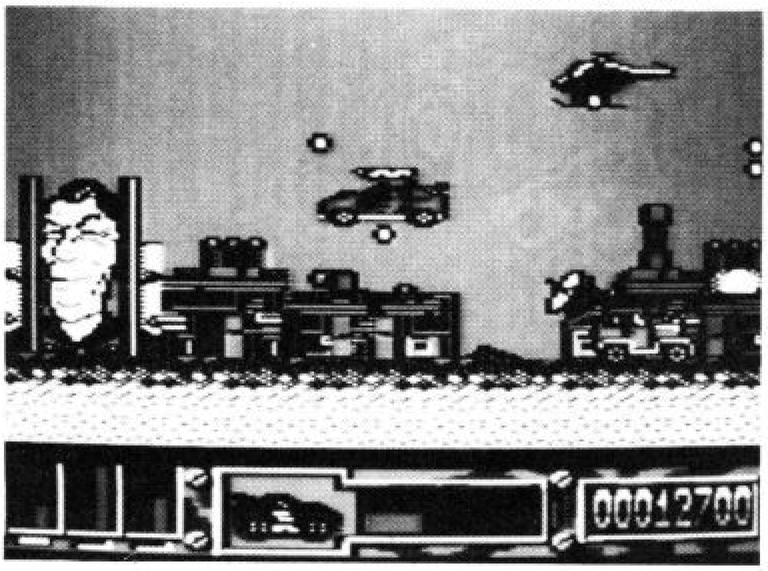
Once selection is complete, the team heads out on their mission to confront Venom.

The missions are as follows:

● To save the President of the Peaceful Nations Alliance. The President has been kidnapped by Venom while on peace summit talks between the world's nations. He was in the process of signing a peace treaty, which would have ensured peace for decades. The mission is to rescue the President from the evil clutches of Venom.

● To destroy a new Venom base. Recent reports have been received about a new Venom base which is being used to co-ordinate their Middle Eastern activities. They are tapping into all of the strong producing oil fields, and are taking control of the important oil resources needed by the rest of the world. The mission is to render the base inactive by attacking it.

● Destroy weapon and take a ruby back to its temple. Venom has been very, very naughty, and stolen the fabulous ruby from the sacred Crown of Fire, which lies at the base of a dormant volcano deep in the jungle. They intend to use the ruby within a high-powered laser and cause large amounts of damage to several populated areas. What you have to do is destroy the weapon (that is, of course, after you've removed the ruby!) and return it to its rightful owners.



The program uses a multi-load function, and all three missions are loaded in this way. Each Mask agent is selected from the keyboard. This makes control of the current vehicle extremely difficult – you have to reach across the keyboard while trying to defend yourself from oncoming traffic often finishing with your vehicle being either blasted out of the sky, or sunk in a lake.

The graphics are of average quality, but the use of colour is what really brings out the better points of the game. Sound is minimal and playability is sluggish.

▸ GRAPHICS	8
▸ SOUND	7
▸ VALUE	7
▸ PLAYABILITY	7

THE HUNT FOR RED OCTOBER

▸ MACHINES: AMSTRAD 1512/IBM/ATARI ST/COMMODORE AMIGA
▸ SUPPLIER: ARGUS PRESS SOFTWARE FOR OXFORD DIGITAL ENTERPRISES
▸ PRICE: CBM64, SPEC, AMS £14.95/ST, AMIGA £24.95
▸ VERSION TESTED: ATARI ST
▸ REVIEWER: STEVE

The original novel of *The Hunt for Red October* is a modern spy thriller centred on naval warfare, with a very high level of technical realism, and the game does not disgrace it by any means.

You are in charge of one of the latest Soviet atomic missile submarines, the Red October, and you have decided to defect to the United States!

You have no communication with the outside world. Your own side are trying to track and kill you. The NATO forces, your normal enemy, may also attack if you pose too much of a threat. You cannot simply sail into New York harbour, you must surrender your submarine in secret. *The Hunt for Red October* resembles an adventure game, in that you must work out the various tactics as you go (reading the novel first helps considerably).

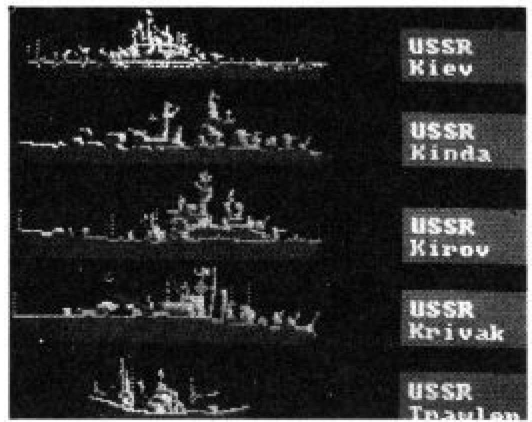
The first stage is to pilot the submarine at immense speed through the underwater canyons to the east of Iceland and out to the safety of the Atlantic without being caught by other ships and submarines, and without running yourself into an underwater cliff.

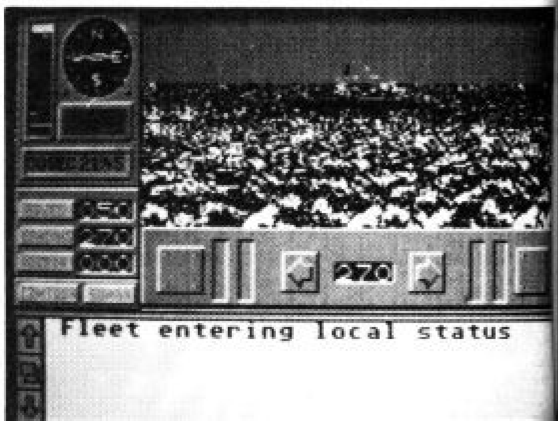
In particular, the terrain following sonar does not always match the sonar map, with disastrous results. Otherwise the simple, icon-driven controls of the submarine function extremely well.

After you have been sunk on your first twenty attempts (do not underestimate this game!) you will get your submarine out into the depths of the Atlantic, where it will be much harder to track. If, however, you are found by your own side then you are dead. The same realistic tactics used in the book to prevent this actually work in the game, and so eventually you will come to the Atlantic seaboard of the United States. And what do you do then? Work it out for yourself – or read the book.

▸ GRAPHICS	9
▸ REALISM	8
▸ VALUE	9
▸ PLAYABILITY	9









FOUR
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KING OF C

▶ MACHINES: MACINTOSH, AMIGA
▶ SUPPLIER: MIRRORSOFT/CINEMAWARE
▶ PRICE: £29.95
▶ VERSION TESTED: AMIGA
▶ REVIEWER: DAVID

The latest Cinemaware release *King Of Chicago*, has just landed on our desk, thrown through a second storey window attached to a fizzing bomb. . . ooops! The game takes you back to the gangland era of the 30s; October 24th 1931 to be precise.

Al Capone has just started an eleven year stretch in Alcatraz for tax evasion, leaving his Southside gang in the evil and dangerous hands of Tony Santucci. As Pinky Callahan, an aspiring hood in the opposing Northside gang, it has long been your dream to unite the two sides of Chicago to produce a single, all-powerful gang. . . with you as head man of course!

Now, with Capone languishing in jail, you see your chance. But first you must establish yourself as number one on the Northside. At the start of the game you are only third in the pecking order behind 'The Old Man' and Ben, his advisor.

You figure The Old Man is ready for the drop anyway, and Ben should step aside, given the right 'incentive'. That still leaves the others in the gang; you'll need to earn their respect, and then keep it, otherwise you'll wake up dead one morning.

The action starts in 1931 and ends in 1934 when all the leaders of organised crime held a meeting in New York to establish Murder Inc. a national crime syndicate that considered Chicago too barbaric too be included amongst their ranks.

King gives you a chance to change the course of history by turning the shambles that is the Chicago gangland scene, into a cohesive, profitable concern and earn an invitation to join the syndicate. Only then will the full weight of organised crime secure your position as King of Chicago.

Just as in the movies, the game features a number of characters that will be involved in the game. But, unlike the movies, the characters in King sometimes start a new game with a different role to play in the story or a changed reputation.

Take Pinky, your own character, for instance. At the start of some games, he has the reputation for being tough. In other games, he is a wimp. By reacting in varying ways to different characters, you can change the way Pinky is perceived by others. If, for example, you give in too often, to the wishes of Lola, your girlfriend, the gang may decide to elect a leader with more backbone. Conversely, by being cool to Lola you will earn respect from your subordinates, and threats will suddenly become more effective. But, if you ignore her too much she may go over to Tony Santucci which would severely dent your credibility rating with the rest of the gang.

Once the game has loaded, and the game's title screen has been peppered with machine gun bullets, the superb sound track opens with some typically laid back 30s jazz. If you do nothing at this point, the game will make a movie without you, making all the decisions for Pinky, although he may react differently under computer control.

As mentioned above, the game starts just after Capone's imprisonment.

As the game progresses, you will gradually build up a picture of who is with you and who isn't, who you can trust a little, and who you can't trust at all. You will need to keep those who matter sweet, and dispose



GARRIS

▶ MACHINE: AMIGA
▶ SUPPLIER: RAINBOW ARTS
▶ PRICE: £23.00
▶ REVIEWER: CHRIS

All good games develop clones and *Gauntlet*, the D & D style arcade game, was no exception.

However, it is extremely rare to find a game which not only lives up to the original arcade machine, but also beats the hell out of all the other rip-offs.

Garrison is such a game. Based on the original *Gauntlet* machine, this version of the tried and tested 'maze' idea just goes to show what can be achieved using 16-bit power.

As with Atari's classic you can choose to play from a number of different fantasy characters, each with his/her own personal attributes. The arcade had four to choose from: Elf, Wizard, Warrior and Valkyre. *Garrison* actually goes one better by offering a fifth choice, a Dwarf named Thorin.

Still, having said that, you can't have as many players as the arcade machine.

The basic idea of this type of game is to bash as many monsters, magicians and deaths as you can while trying to run off with all the treasure.

The plot of *Garrison*, however, involves a magic herb which lies at the end of the game.

It is this herb which will save a beautiful princess from dying of a terrible illness. Although this is a nice twist, most of us will be content with just grabbing all the gold!

Once the game is started, the screen is shown from a bird's eye view, looking down on the 3D rooms of the castle. Guiding your player you must negotiate the twisting passages grabbing all that you can.

Although food and treasure are your main concerns, various magical objects are to be found scattered about the castle.

These objects range from various potions to lethal scrolls which, when cast, will destroy everything around you depending on your magical ability and also the power of the enemy.

The evil nasties which infest the 128 rooms of the game come in all shapes and sizes. There are club wielding barbarian Guards, spell casting Sorcerers and even the odd Death or two. Most of these creatures will appear from generators which are to be found in abundance around the castle. Passing by a generator without destroying it is a very foolish thing to do.

Certain beings are very difficult to destroy, and death can only be wiped out with a magical scroll.

A feature unique to *Garrison* is the ability to change characters during a game. This is very handy as different levels rely on different character abilities, although it must be possible to complete every level with each one.

When you've grabbed all the gold you want you must race to the nearest exit where you'll disappear with a delightful bongy kind of sound. That is if you find the right exit; as some devious rooms have around twenty or so.

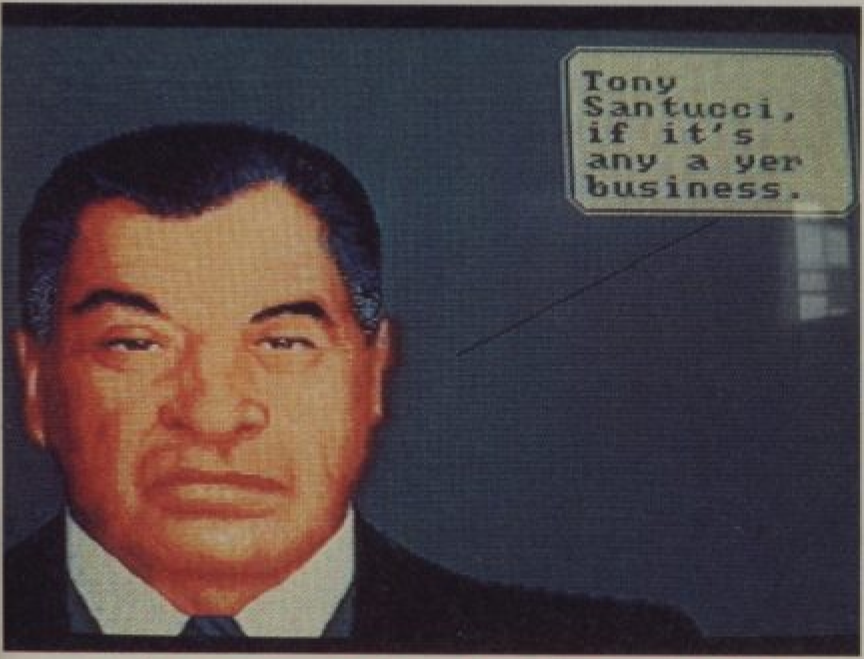
One dungeon, entitled 'Conjurers and Demons' has a supply of food enclosed inside four walls. To get it you must go right to the end of the level and. . . but that would be telling now wouldn't it!

One of the best things about *Garrison* is its true arcade quality graphics. No flicker, no colour clash and smooth eight way scrolling – this game has some of the best graphics ever seen on a computer game.

However, there is one slight oddity regarding memory.

If you have a standard 512K machine, both players have the same outward appearance although they still have different weapons and abilities. On a one meg Amiga each player has their own individual appearance. On the whole this isn't a problem but it would have been a lot better to keep,

CHICAGO



with the dead wood. And, while all this is going on, you've still got to find time to make the gang strong and successful.

On tour desk is a map of Chicago, divided into four sections: the Northside (your patch), the Westside, the Loop, and the Southside (Santucci's domain). By clicking on the relevant area, you can initiate an attack on that part of the city. Sometimes Ben will advise you against being too hasty, either because you haven't got enough men, or money to pay them. Sometimes he will suggest you buy a politician or two before going in with all barrels firing.

Also on your desk are a picture of Lola, some keys and your ledger book. You can visit Lola by clicking her picture. The keys are used to continue the movie, sometimes introducing new sub-plots along the way. Perhaps some dames have been kidnapped from one of your speakeasies, or you might get the chance to curtail Santucci's gin operation with a threatening phone call to his supplier.

Opening the ledger allows you to make decisions as to your activities in Gaming, the Rackets, and Speakeasies. Should they remain the same or be increased or cut back? Then there's the wage bill to consider. Should you give any of the boys a rise, and do you need any more men on the payroll, and, more importantly, can you afford them?

As your ambitions grow you'll also need to cultivate friends in city hall. What better way than to 'buy' the next mayor of Chicago. But for that you'll need men and plenty of cash for bribes and vote buying. And even if you do succeed in getting Alderman Burke into city hall, he'll still expect you to continue lining his pocket or, when the crunch comes, Burke won't feel he's got any moral obligation to keep you out of jail.

Tony Santucci's not about to sit back and watch you eat away his Southside empire. If you're playing Bull and Peepers enough dosh they'll catch Santucci's henchman, Guido snooping around waiting to knock you off as soon as you set foot outside your office. Do you kill him then and there, get Bull to rough him up a bit, or just send him back to his boss with a message?

What makes *King of Chicago* a good game, rather than just a showpiece for stunning graphics and music, is the variety of different movies this type of game structure allows you to make.

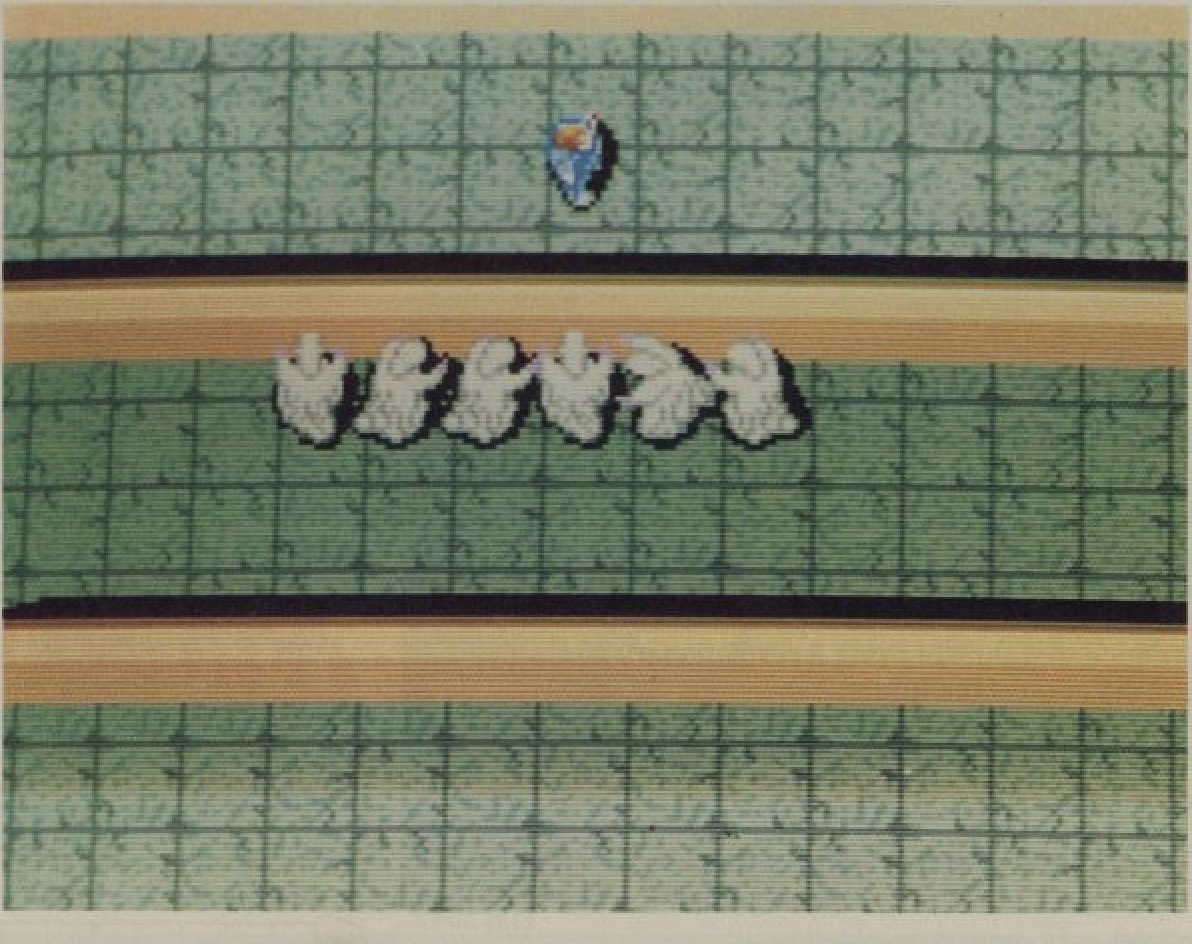
I've played a number of games of *King of Chicago*, each one completely different. The last time, I succeeded in owning three quarters of the windy city, the dosh was rolling in, and I had more than 50 men on the payroll. Then I shot an innocent girl by mistake, while trying to rescue her from Lucky's. I was arrested by my goody, goody childhool pal Tom Malone, and was subsequently killed on the electric chair, and all because I was scimping on my bribes! Oh well, I'll know not to be so cheap next time.

King of Chicago is the first so-called computer movie to live up to the name. It is as huge as it is flexible. The graphics, stereo sounds, and musical score fit the game perfectly. This is bound to rocket straight to the top of the 16 bit charts. Justifiably so!

▶ GRAPHICS	9
▶ SOUND	10
▶ VALUE	10
▶ PLAYABILITY	9

C+VG HIT!

SON



the characters.

The graphics are complemented by some really nice sound effects, including a guzzling sound when you collect a meal and a booming laugh which echoes around when you kick the bucket.

With 128 levels of sheer arcade quality action and addictiveness which makes grown men weep, *Garrison* is the definitive *Gauntlet* doppleganger. US Gold will have to make the official *Gauntlet* for the Amiga arcade perfect if they want to sell any copies.

▶ GRAPHICS	10
▶ SOUND	9
▶ VALUE	9
▶ PLAYABILITY	10

C+VG HIT!

Preview The Future!
PROJECT: STEALTH FIGHTER



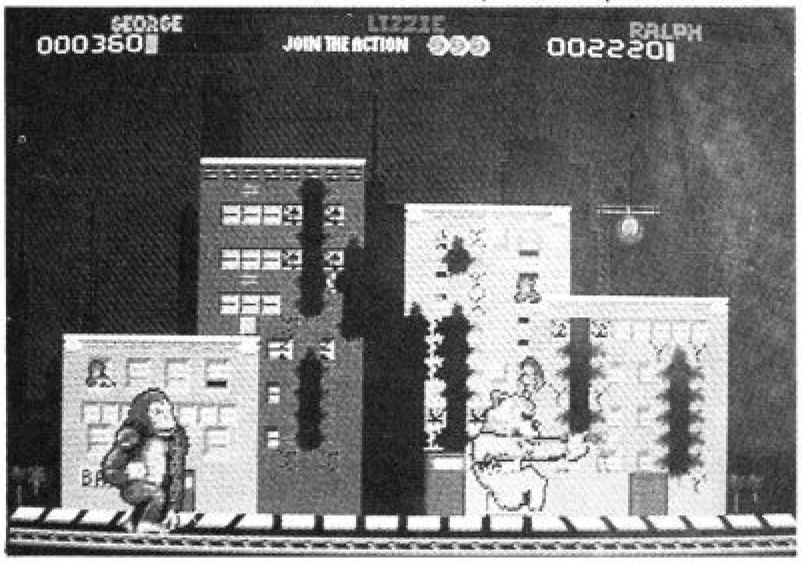
RAMPAGE

▸ MACHINE: ATARI ST
▸ SUPPLIER: ACTIVISION
▸ PRICE: £24.99
▸ REVIEWER: EUGENE

Rampage combines some of the best elements of over-the-top American 'B' movies and a simple but addictive games design to excellent effect.

The storyline is a scream. Three 'ordinary' American teenagers head down to their local burger joint for a blow out – BUT, little do they know that those cranks in the food development lab have slipped some dangerous experimental additives into the Big Mucks (Look, don't go on at me, I didn't write it). The result: three ordinary American kids turn into three ordinary American monsters – bent on reducing every city in the dear old US of A into so much rubble.

The best thing about the game is that the designers didn't bottle out on the plot. No, you don't play the police force or the army – you play the part of the monster and your aim is to demolish as many buildings, helicopters, and police cars as you can whilst snacking on the inhabitants of New York, Chicago and many other cities.



Three players can join in the demolition – working collectively or playing against each other. You can let the computer control two of the monsters and take them on.

Points are earned for destroying buildings. You can make buildings tumble to the ground with that characteristic puff of smoke at ground level by punching their windows out and bashing gaping holes in the walls. When there are enough holes the buildings will fall.

One of the first licensed coin-op conversions for the ST – *Rampage* whets my excitement for '88.

Nice one Activision but just one moan – £24.99 is a bit steep, don't you think?

▸ GRAPHICS	8
▸ SOUND	6
▸ VALUE	4
▸ PLAYABILITY	7



AMIGAS AND TONIC TILES

TONIC TILES
▸ MACHINE: ATARI ST
▸ SUPPLIER: THE EDGE
▸ PRICE: £19.99
▸ VERSION TESTED: ST
▸ REVIEWER: DAVID

AMIGAS
▸ MACHINE: AMIGA
▸ SUPPLIER: PANDORA/INTERCEPTOR MICROS
▸ VERSION TESTED: AMIGA
▸ REVIEWER: DAVID

At this rate there will be as many *Arkanoid/Breakout* clones as there are karate games!

Two more dropped into the C+VG 16-bit Christmas bag this week: *Tonic Tiles* and *Amigas* (Amiga) (ST), both programmed in Europe and licensed by UK companies for domestic consumption.

Tonic Tiles was programmed in France by 'd3M' and is published over here by The Edge. The game is most notable for its amazing graphics and animation. Game play is slow to start but picks up in later levels.

Sure, a game should be fast and furious on level one, the ball is coming back at you before you've had a chance to breathe. But *Tonic Tiles* has 33 levels, the first 16 of which can be accessed at will. The remaining 17 have to be played for! The game also has a screen editor, allowing you to tweak, or completely change any, or all, of the first 16 levels.

It's a shame that a potential winner has been spoilt by too little attention to playability. Games like *Thrust* have shown that a good game doesn't have to have show-stopping graphics to be playable, but unfortunately, it doesn't work the other way round.

Amigas was programmed by Golden Games in Germany and is being released over here by Interceptor Micro's through their Pandora label. *Amigas* looks and plays very much like *Arkanoid*, although there are a number of additional features worthy of note.

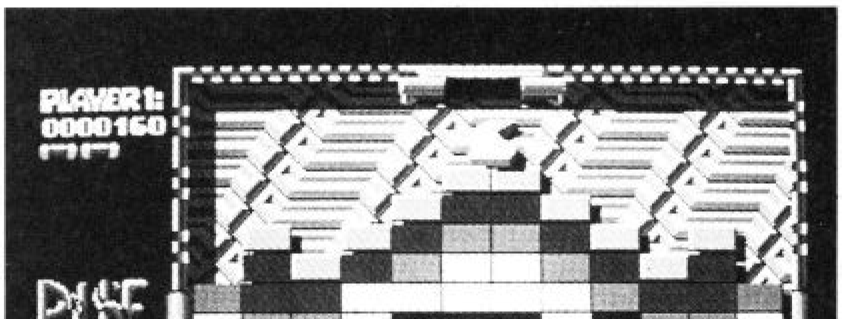
First off, the game boasts a brace of entirely convincing bounce and bang sound effects as well as the, by now, obligatory sampled music.

Unlike most games of this ilk, the speed of the ball doesn't gradually increase with the number of impacts. Instead, it is determined by where on the bat it is hit. Thus, if the ball hits the bat dead centre, it will rebound slowly, but will zoom away when hit anywhere near the edges.

Another unique feature in *Amigas* is the generator block. When one of these is hit, it disappears, only to produce one, or a group of blocks elsewhere which, in turn, may produce still more.

Both *Tonic Tiles* and *Amigas* have the standard set of extras, such as splitter, magnetic bat, laser etc.

	TONIC TILES	AMIGAS
▸ GRAPHICS	9	9
▸ SOUND	8	9
▸ VALUE	6	9
▸ PLAYABILITY	5	9



TONIC TILES

BAD CATS

▸ **MACHINE: ATARI ST, AMIGA**
▸ **SUPPLIER: GO/US. GOLD**
▸ **PRICE: £19.99**
▸ **VERSION TESTED: AMIGA**
▸ **REVIEWER: DAVID**

The year is 1984 and Los Angeles is preparing for the summer Olympics. But, while all the athletes are completing their final training and the dignitaries are preparing their speeches, something strange is happening out on the streets.

Not to be outdone, the stray cat population of LA are planning their own Cat Olympics.

Bad Cat features four games, each interlinked with a city screen, in which you must get from one venue to the next, preferably without being run over. Each event must be completed within a certain time limit and bonus points are awarded for excellence. You have unlimited lives (who ever said a cat had only nine lives?) but suffer a time penalty you loose one.

Event one is the obstacle course, featuring a number of graphically impressive side-on views of climbing frames, walls, trampolines and swings. Each screen must be negotiated as quickly as possible without falling off the frame, hitting any of the walls, putting a paw into the water, or banging your head. In the last screen, you have to build up enough momentum on the swing to catch a key hanging from a street lamp.

The second event takes place in the swimming pool where two spring mounted bumpers are sliding backwards and forwards in the water. All you have to do is gather enough momentum to jump from one bumper to the other, at the same time punching a geometrical shape, displayed on the overhead electronic scoreboard. It sounds easy, but the joystick control makes this event too hard and very frustrating, although, once again, the graphics and digitised sounds are great.

Event three finds you where you belong: in the sewers beneath the city. Here you must make your way through a number of unsavoury screens, infested with rats and other 'notorious creatures' as the manual describes them.

Bad Cat is an imaginative package which scores highly in the sound and graphics departments but is sometimes a little frustrating to play because of the rather bewildering set of joystick controls used in different parts of the game.

Apart from this one niggle, *Bad Cat* is entertaining and, in parts, quite challenging.

▸ GRAPHICS	10
▸ SOUND	9
▸ VALUE	9
▸ PLAYABILITY	8

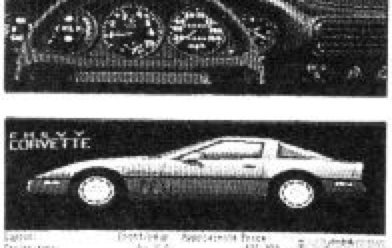
ST hit



TEST DRIVE









▸ **MACHINE: C64, ATARI ST, AMIGA**
▸ **SUPPLIER: ELECTRONIC ARTS**
▸ **PRICE: £24.95 (AMIGA ATARI ST)/**
▸ **VERSION TESTED: AMIGA**
▸ **REVIEWER: DAVID**

Problems, problems. You've just made your first million from writing a hit game and now you're going to celebrate in style – splashing out on a hugely expensive car.

The car salesman, sensing you're a man of means, offers to let you take out any of the cars in the showroom for a test drive. But which to choose. No problem, you'll take them all out with *Test Drive*. Programmed by Accolade and distributed in the UK by Electronic Arts, it's the latest in 16-bit driving and puts you behind the wheel of five of the world's flashest cars, and gives you the chance to put them through their paces on the open road.

Before going out for a drive, you can review the performance statistics of each car. The detailed information shown here includes engine lay-out and type, BHP, torque, breaking distances, transmission, compression ratio, displacement, and tyres (both front and rear).

The view is from the driver's seat from where you can see the accurately reproduced dash board of your chosen car. Above the windscreen is your rear view mirror, useful for clocking cops before they clock you.

If you drive through a radar trap, your radar detector will begin to flash out its warning. When it stops flashing you know you've been clocked. Of course, you can always try and out-run the cops, but don't let them pass you unless you want a ticket.

The road, you have chosen for your test drive, winds its way up the side of a mountain. Steer too far to the right and you'll hit the mountain wall, but to the left is a sheer drop down to the valley below, so the idea is to avoid any expensive little accidents by staying firmly on the road.

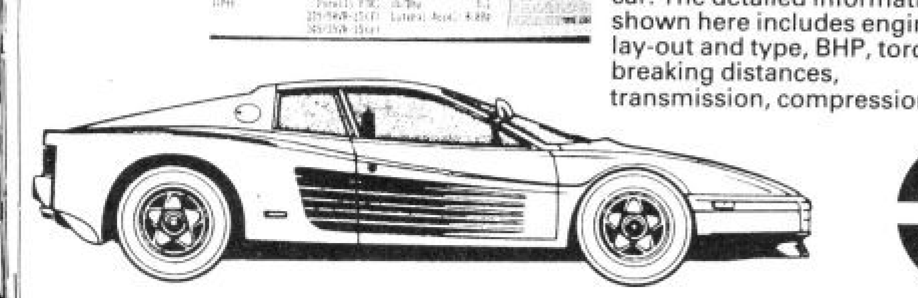
Because this is a public highway, you'll meet other drivers, some in cars, others driving vans or lorries. If you're really pushing the car to the maximum, they'll be plenty of vehicles to overtake while, at the same time, avoiding oncoming traffic.

To keep you on the straight and narrow, there are plenty of road signs. Some show the speed limit for that particular stretch of road, others show the shape of the road ahead, announces the beginning or end of a third lane for slow-coaches, or informs you that a gas station lies just around the corner.

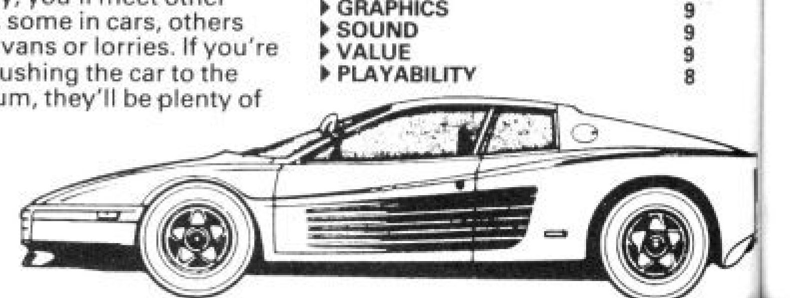
Gas stations give you a breather and a chance to fill up with petrol. You will also get a report, often laced with heavy sarcasm, as to your progress so far. The report includes the time taken to complete the last stage (from the previous gas station) and your average speed.

The annoying thing about *Test Drive* is the amount of time it takes to get from one part of the program to another, the continual disk access being a consequence, no doubt, of the graphic richness of the piece.

▸ GRAPHICS	9
▸ SOUND	9
▸ VALUE	9
▸ PLAYABILITY	8



C+VG HIT!



▶ MACHINES: ATARI ST, SPECTRUM, COMMODORE 64, AMSTRAD CPC RANGE
▶ SUPPLIER: LEISURE GENIUS/ VIRGIN GAMES
▶ PRICE: ST (£19.95)/SPECTRUM/ AMSTRAD (£9.95/£14.95)/CBM 64 (£12.95/£14.95)
▶ VERSION TESTED: ATARI ST, SPECTRUM 128K (PLUS 2 AND 3), AMSTRAD CPC
▶ REVIEWER: DAVID

SCRUPLES

"Would you shoot your granny for a thousand pounds?", "Would you eat dog food for a month to win a slap up meal for you and Samantha Fox at Stringfellows?"

You've all seen them on the box. Those absurb questions that get sprung on passers by in the street in the *Scruples* board game TV advertisements.

In the computer version each player is dealt a number of 'Dilemma Cards', each of which contains a set of circumstances and a related question. To give you a flavour of the game, and a better understanding of the dilemmas it can cause (arguments while playing Scruples have been sighted in a number of divorce cases in the States!), here's what's written on just three dilemma cards:

"In the supermarket, you send a dozen packages tumbling into the aisle. No one sees you. Do you walk away?"

"You hear the conversation of two strangers when you pick up the phone. Do you listen to it?"

"Your neighbour in an adjacent block of flats insists on doing yoga nude, in full view. Do you complain to the landlord?"

With the dilemma cards, you are also given one 'Answer card', on which is written either Yes, No, or Depends. When it is your turn, you must select a dilemma card and read it to one of your opponents. Your choice of card and opponent is govered by what is contained on your Answer card, because the idea is to illicit, from your opponent, the same answer as is on your own card.

Thus, if you knew Don to be a particularly honest person, and you were holding a 'No' answer card, you might ask him the first Dilemma question (about the supermarket packages), expecting him to say "No, I wouldn't just walk away". The thing is that Don knows full well you would be expecting him to say No and so might answer 'Yes' instead. But, then again, you may be trying the double-bluff, and be holding a 'Yes' card after all; this is what makes Scruples such fun to play.

If Don doesn't give the answer you were hoping for, you throw away the dilemma and answer cards, just used, and pick one more of each. If Don's response matches your answer card, you pick a new answer card, but do not have to pick another dilemma card.

If you think he is lying, you can challenge Don to justify his answer after which it is put to the vote. If you wish, you can give Don one of your remaining dilemma cards, if not, he gives you one of his. The first player to be left with no Dilemma cards is the winner.

The computer version sticks very much to the rules of the original, but has a few added features such as four reasons associated with each answer that may be given to every dilemma question. These answers are used when a player must justify his position prior to a vote, and also serve to show why a player makes the decisions he does.

The program also elegantly side-steps the problem of the computer players knowing nothing of their human (or computer) opponents. At the start of the game, each human player must enter their personality so that the others can try and predict how they might react to various dilemmas.

A player's personality profile is built up from the following variables, each given a rating between +8 and -8 by the player him or herself. You will be required to assess your own character in terms of principles, personal integrity, professional integrity, trust, family relationships, partner relations, friendships, busy-body factor, humanity, greed, shyness, and honesty.

Although the computer uses a player's profile to predict how he might react to certain dilemmas, if a player's answers are 'out of character', the computer will automatically amend that player's personality to fit the way he is reacting.

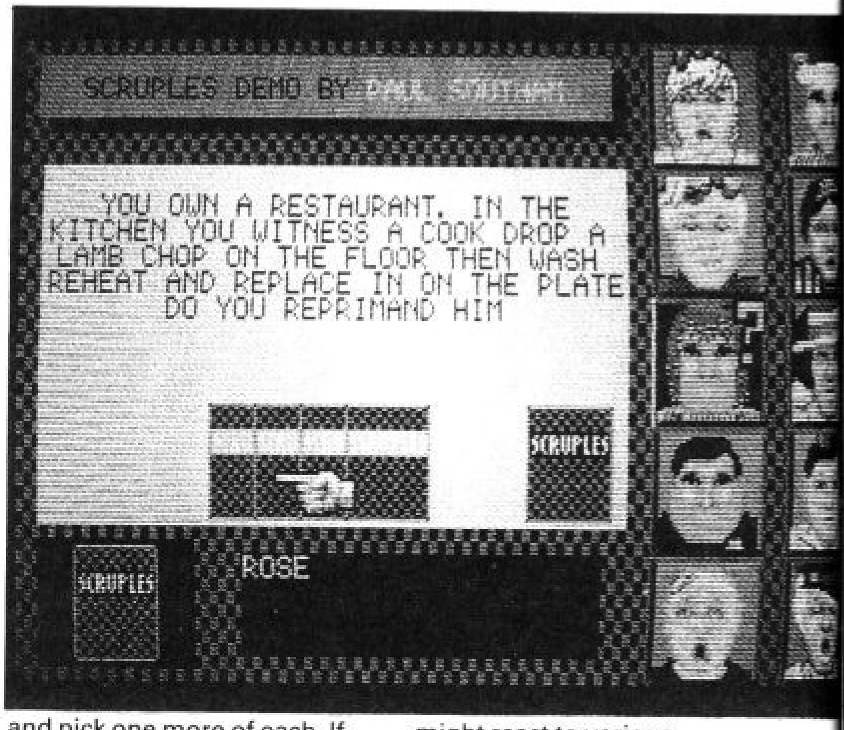
Scruples is a game for three to ten players. In the computer version there can be any mix of human and computer player, meaning that you can use the program simply as a dealer and electronic board, or as a source of opponents; you can even sit back and watch a batch of computer players slog it out on their own.

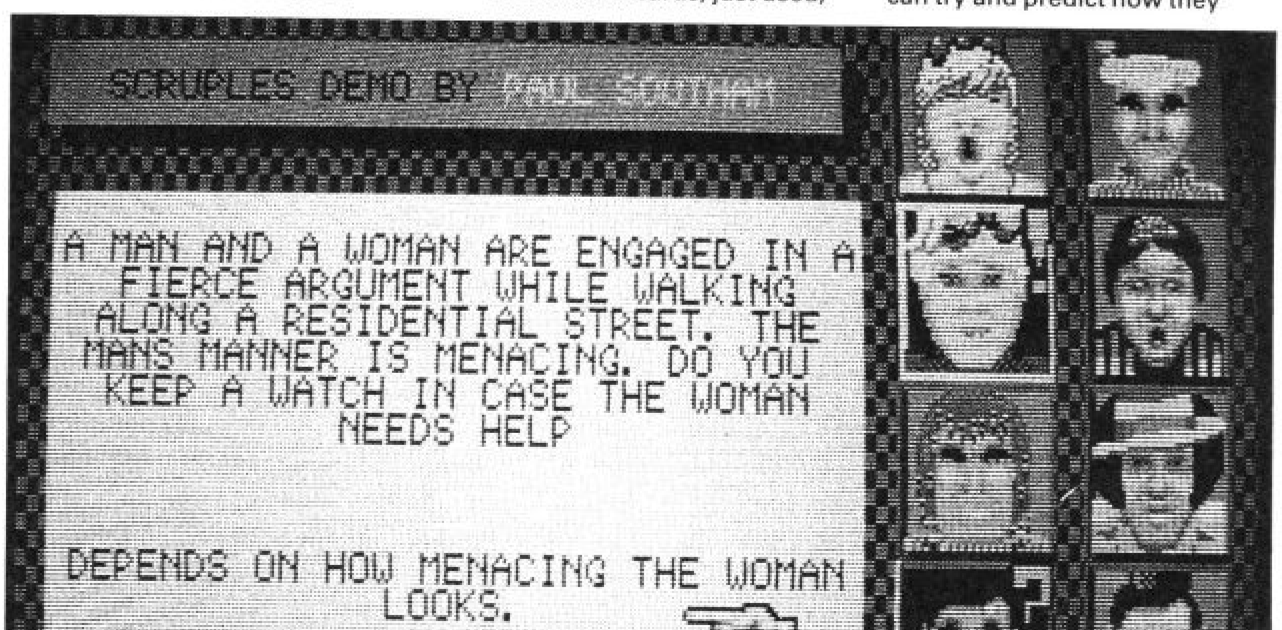
There are 64 different computer players to choose from, on all the reviewed systems, drawn from all walks of life. You can play against anyone from a punk to a vicar, from a model to a businessman. Each character has his or her own face and their personality profile is randomly constructed every time the game is loaded, so you may never play with the same character twice.

The screen layout is well conceived, and the program is simplicity itself to use, with prompts at all the right places.

Each version of the game is designed to get the most from the various computers, especially the Speccy version. We shall have to wait and see what restrictions will be placed on the 48K version.

If you fancy a laugh during the Christmas holidays, or enjoy playing *Scruples* but have difficulty finding opponents, then this could be right up your street. Also recommended for older children up to the age of about 70!





▶ GRAPHICS	9
▶ SOUND	8
▶ VALUE	9
▶ PLAYABILITY	9

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INSANITY FIGHT

▶ MACHINE: AMIGA
▶ SUPPLIER: MICRODEAL
▶ PRICE: £24.95
▶ REVIEWER: DAVID

Most attempts to produce a first class 16-bit vertical shoot 'em-up, have failed, mostly through bad design or shoddy coding.

Microdeal has been riding on the vertical shoot 'em-up band-wagon for some time now. First there was *Jupiter Probe* followed quickly by the impressive looking, though hard to play, *Goldrunner*. While waiting for the inevitable *Goldrunner II* to be completed, the Cornwall-based 16-bit specialist has released *Insanity Fight*, an Amiga blaster snapped up from Swiss newcomers Linel.

Unlike many others of the gendre, *Insanity Fight* is played across the full width of the screen, with the status area occupying the bottom quarter. Although the instructions are mean almost to Ultimate standards, they do contain a diagram of the status area, showing what information is given. Apart from listing the seven bonus elements you can collect, the rest is left to you to suss out for yourself.

The graphics of each level are decidedly *Uridium-esque*, but go far beyond even *Goldrunner* in terms of detail and colour.

As mentioned above, there are seven bonus elements that can be picked up, by flying over them. These are Turbo, Supershot, Invisible Fighter, Changed Sheering, Mirroring, Less Energy-More Score, and Less Score-More Energy.

Although the function of most elements is fairly self-evident, some warrant a word of explanation. Turbo, for example, gives you a sudden surge of speed which sends you hurtling forwards at an uncontrollable rate. Often this results in you crashing head-long into some form of obstruction, so Turbo should be used with extreme caution.

When you pass over a "Mirroring" element, you are immediately transported to the mirror image position the other side of the screen. Thus, a mirroring element on the far right would send you over to the far left, and vice-versa.

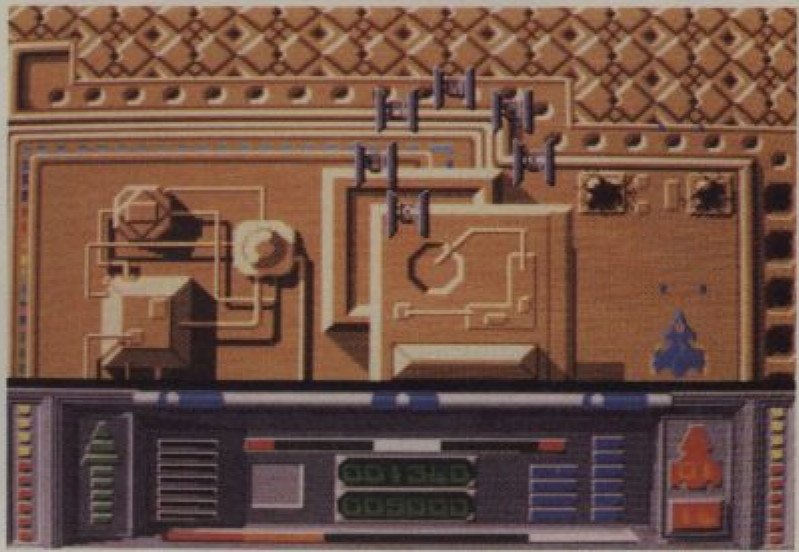
Later landscapes are snow covered or dark and bleak. All are riddled with the multi-coloured features seen in level one.

Insanity Fight is, without doubt, the most playable and impressive looking vertical shooter yet to emerge for either the ST or Amiga.

▶ GRAPHICS	10
▶ SOUND	10
▶ VALUE	9
▶ PLAYABILITY	10

C+VG HIT!





TANGLEWOOD

▶ MACHINE: ATARI ST
▶ SUPPLIER: MICRODEAL
▶ PRICE: £19.95
▶ REVIEWER: DAVID

If it hadn't been for the scrap of blue paper left on your doorstep by uncle Arthur, you wouldn't be hunting for gems on an undistinguished planet called Tanglewood, hidden away in a dusty, forgotten corner of the galaxy.

Apparently, Arthur had bought the mining rights to Tanglewood for next to nothing, a price that accurately mirrored the total lack of mineable minerals to be found there. . . or so it appeared.

Anyway, just as Arthur was about to file Tanglewood under 'dead loss', one of his mining mobiles rescued a native who, in return for his life, revealed that some of the pretty, but otherwise unremarkable stones, which Arthur had previously ignored, in fact possessed special qualities.

It turned out that the stones had various uses, some of them military, that gave them immense value. Sadly, while celebrating his good fortune, Arthur was rather too loose-lipped about his new found knowledge, and news soon filtered back to the company that had originally sold him Tanglewood's mining rights.



The next thing he knew, Arthur's mining mobiles were being hounded by the company's own disrupter mobiles; his mining rights documents have been stolen, and the company were claiming that they had never sold the rights to him in the first place, and were bringing a case against him to have him thrown off the planet.

It was at this point that Arthur, knowing your prowess in the field of computers, wrote you the note, asking for your help. You have ten days to find the documents, stolen from your uncle Arthur.

Tanglewood is a huge arcade adventure in which you can control a number of mobiles over (and inside) the planet. Each mobile was originally programmed to do certain tasks. Two problems here; firstly, the original programs were full of bugs, and secondly much of the data has become corrupted and is now useless. Mobiles are, to say the least, frustrating to control!

As if this wasn't enough you will also have to enlist the help of the native T'nglians who are a friendly, though highly ritualistic species. In fact, it turns out that every kind of interaction with the T'nglians is governed by a rigid set of rules.

The graphics of the planet's surface have a quality all of their own, a kind of Tanglewoodian feel you might say. The graphics inside the mine are equally impressive, giving you a first person view of proceedings as you wander through the tunnels.

It is difficult to categorise *Tanglewood*, which in itself is not a bad thing. The game, including movement, is entirely mouse controlled, the only text being in the form of information and reports.

Without spending a great deal of time on this one, it would be difficult, and indeed unfair, to give a final verdict on the overall quality of the game as an adventure; the problem being that it seems to be rather vast! If the solution sheets, supplied with the evaluation copy, are anything to go by, *Tanglewood* should keep problem solvers busy for weeks.

▶ GRAPHICS	9
▶ SOUND	7
▶ VALUE	9
▶ PLAYABILITY	7

C+VG HIT!



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DEFLEKTOR

- MACHINES: SPECTRUM 48/128/ AMSTRAD CPC RANGE/ COMMODORE 64/ATARI ST
- SUPPLIER: GREMLIN GRAPHICS
- PRICE: SPECTRUM £7.99, AMSTRAD/C64 (TAPE) £9.99, (DISK) £14.99/ATARI ST £19.99
- VERSION TESTED: SPECTRUM C64
- REVIEWER: PAUL

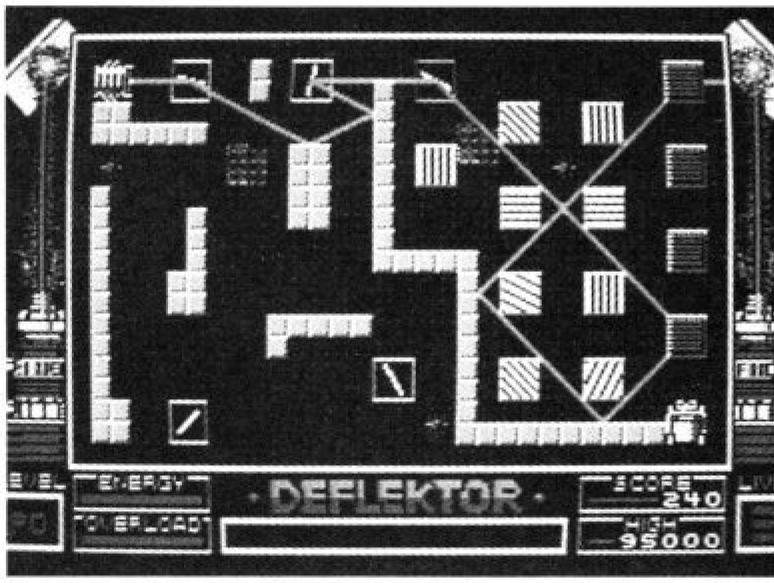
It's always refreshing when you come across a game that's a little 'different' and Gremlin's *Deflektor* is certainly that. The press release says "No heroes. No foes. Only pure skill and technology". And who am I to disagree with that?

In each of the game's 60 screens there is a laser transmitter and receiver. The object of the game is to guide the laser beam around each screen until it makes contact with the receiver.

At the start of each level the screen contains a number of bombs which disappear in a puff of smoke when hit by the beam. By manipulating the rotating mirrors, and using the various walls, transporters, and lenses, you must first destroy all the bombs on the screen, before being able to reach the receiver.

When the last bomb bites the dust, a section of all, or some other blockage disappears, opening up a clear path along which the beam can now travel to the receiver.

Whenever the beam is reflected directly back into the laser, the system starts to overload, giving you precious few seconds to avoid disaster, by deflecting the beam elsewhere. Other hazards include mines which are detonated by continuous or repeated exposure to the beam, and annoying, blob-like aliens, who have a nasty habit of meddling with mirrors at the worst possible moment.



Many levels have maze-like sections and the walls also reflect the beam, and often play an important part in its journey.

With practice and demo modes, and enough levels to keep you going for weeks, *Deflektor* is well worth a look if you're after an arcade game that'll exercise the brain cells as well as test your dexterity.

	SPECTRUM	CBM
GRAPHICS	8	9
SOUND	6	8
VALUE	8	8
PLAYABILITY	10	10

COSMIC CAUSEWAY

- MACHINE: CBM 64
- SUPPLIER: GREMLIN GRAPHICS
- PRICE: £9.99
- REVIEWER: PAUL

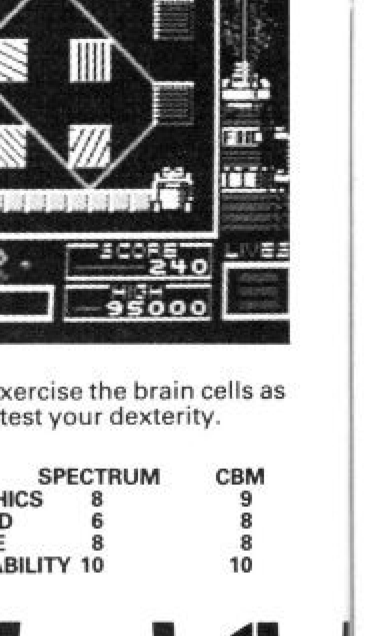
Excuse me while I just re-adjust my eyes. My horizontal hold has taken a severe battering hurtling down the *Cosmic Causeway* otherwise known as *Trailblazer II.*

This is basically *Trailblazer*, only more. Lots more. Much more. Brilliantly more.

You control a bouncing ball which whizzes down 24 fraught-ridden cosmic trails over six levels. The trails consist of different coloured squares, each with its own special property. Some make you speed up, others slow you down. And the black squares do not exist. Land on these and you disappear into the void and one life is lost. You must complete the level in the required time to continue.

The squares and their properties are: Brown (Safe square); Grey (Marks the end of a level. This is where you can select your icons. The timer will not start until you leave this area); Blue (Bounce you in the air); Green (Speeds you up); Red (Slows you down); Purple (Bounce you backwards); Cyan





(Reverse the left/right controls. On higher levels, some red squares behave like cyan ones. (Sneakey, eh?); and Black into the abyss!

Watch out for shimmering white disks. Hit these and you can gain credits which you can spend on the following icon features.

The icons, which last just for one level, are: Score × 3 (Multiplies current level score by three); Roll on ceiling (Where there is one); Cyan Deactivate (Makes cyan squares behave like brown ones); Purple Deactivate (Allows you to roll over purple squares); Turbo (Gives great speed. If your speed is great enough you can smash through walls); Shield (Collision with aliens will not throw you off course, but will destroy them and gain you points); Roll Over Holes (Obvious that); Time Retarder (Slows the timer to half speed).

There are also walls in the Cosmic Causeway with one of three types of doorway through which you must pass. Some doors open and close all the time, some open only as you approach and some will begin to close as you approach.



C+VG REVIEWS 22

ICE HOCKEY

- MACHINES: CBM64/IBM/ATARI ST/AMIGA
- SUPPLIER: DATABYTE
- PRICE: £9.95/£14.95 (CBM 64 CASS AND DISK), £24.95 (IBM/AMIGA/ST)
- REVIEWER: PAUL

I don't know much about hockey and can't get all that worked up about picking winning teams. But I do like a good, action packed game. And this Mindscape import from Databyte is a goodie.

Within a few minutes I was slip sliding away, getting into the thick of the action. I even managed to get myself sent off two or three times for hacking away at the opposition. Okay, I admit I wasn't near the puck but being forced to sit out while valuable playing seconds tick by is very frustrating. Unfair!

The program enables you to be player, coach and manager. So if you're power mad and hungry for God-like authority, you should find plenty to please here.

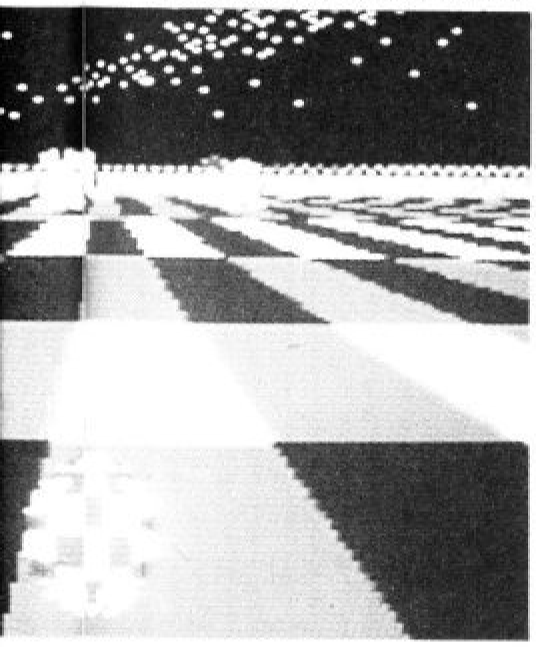
On the ice you have the choice of being centre or goalie. I preferred the centre, giving me chance to roam far and wide and get involved in the action where ever it was. The player you control is highlighted in a different colour to the rest of the teams. The play is fast, smooth and fun. I particularly like the way the players skate about, heads turning this way and that to see what's going on.

The play is also pretty realistic. You make slap shots, block, pass and check with your hips.

Your team can compete in league, division and conference championships, heading ultimately to the Sport Time Cup series. Playing the part of manager/coach you can trade or recruit new players, hold training camps and plan strategies.

The trouble with all this option chasing and team management stuff is it slows the game down. It would have been better if they had used the memory for better arcade-style play – with some elements of beat 'em up. After all ice hockey is probably more suited to flying fists than karate.

GRAPHICS	5
SOUND	4
VALUE	5
PLAYABILITY	6

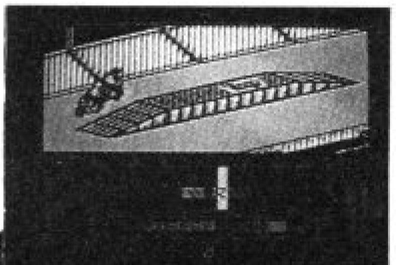


Cosmic Causeway is just that – Cosmic!

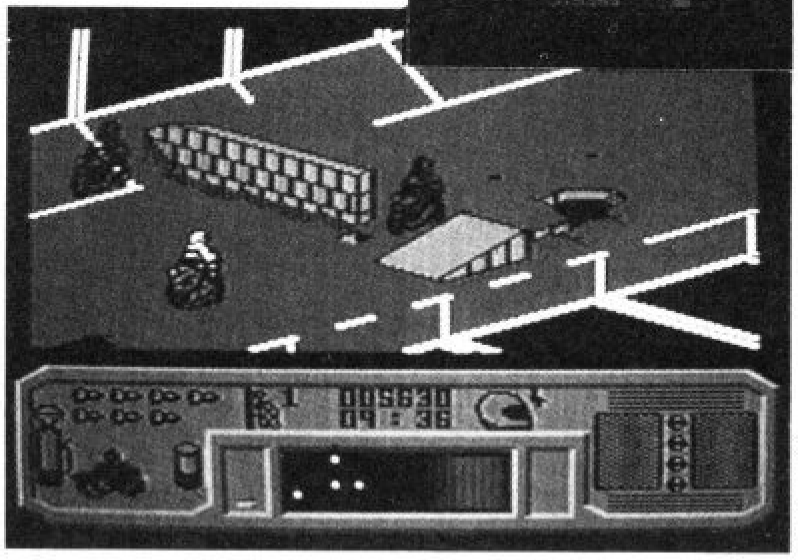
GRAPHICS	9
SOUND	9
VALUE	8
PLAYABILITY	9

C+VG HIT!

MEAN STREAK



- MACHINE: C64/SPECTRUM
- SUPPLIER: MIRRORSOFT
- PRICE: £9.95 (C64 TAPE), £12.95 (C64 DISK) £8.95 (SPEC)
- VERSION TESTED: C64
- REVIEWER: TIM



Burn it up on the Battletrack, the 23rd century equivalent of a motorway! But here it's almost legal to behave in a totally anti-social fashion.

In the 23rd century people travel using matter transport beams and roads are obsolete. But there are gangs of rebel bikers dedicated to keeping the old ways open – a bit like motorised Ramblers I guess.

But true to form they've turned their hobby into a competitive event – Rollerball on wheels. The survivor of the high speed dash around the m-way wins the ultimate bike – the Mean Streak.

Load up the game and you find yourself on the Battletrack, riding a heavily armed super-bike. You have rockets, machine guns and oil to use against your fellow competitors. Extra ammo and oil can be picked up as you race.

Use the on screen radar to pick up other riders and dodge about – avoiding their gunfire and ramming tactics.

Destroy opposing bikers and you win extra time – yup, each of the five levels puts you up against the clock. You can nudge other bikes in deadly obstacles – like walls. And you can jump your bike over rocks, holes in the road, water and oil slicks if you act fast enough.

Everything is controlled via the joystick – which makes steering and firing a bit tricky in tight situations, but is soon mastered after a couple of games.

To wipe out your opponents it's best to allow them to race past you and blast them with rockets or guns – I haven't quite mastered the use of oil slicks yet.

As you race along the diagonally scrolling track you'll come across ramps which can be driven over – and walls which must be dodged or blasted.

Mean Streak is a pretty playable game, with reasonable graphics and a neat driving soundtrack – in fact the music was the thing I liked most about the 64 version of the game.

Not a mega-game – but not a bad addition to your collection.

GRAPHICS	7
SOUND	8
VALUE	7
PLAYABILITY	7

C+VG HIT!

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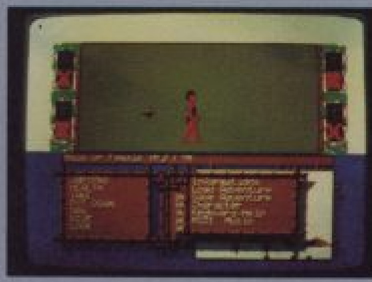
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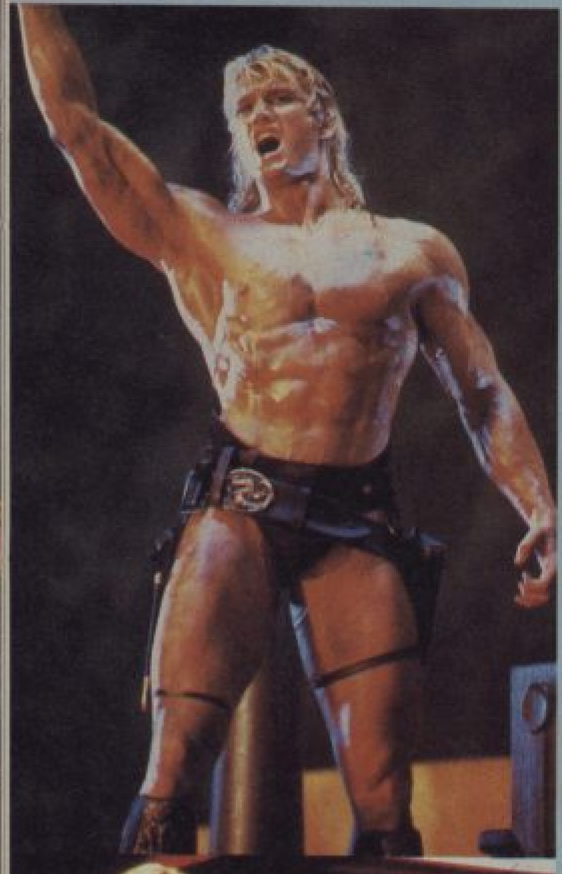
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MASTERS OF T

Picture this: A giant of a man, with flowing blond hair, and more muscles on his little finger than most mortals have in their entire puny bodies.

Who is he? He He-Man, the world's most powerful man, famous toy, star of the Masters of the Universe film and Gremlin Graphics' game.

- MACHINES: CBM64/SPECTRUM/AMSTRAD/ATARI ST
- SUPPLIER: GREMLIN GRAPHICS
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- VERSIONS TESTED: CBM 64/AMSTRAD/SPECTRUM
- REVIEWER: PAUL





Through time the eternal conflict has continually raged – the battle between good and evil. Whoever manages to gain the key to time will eventually triumph and rightly claim the title Master of the Universe.

And it is the struggle for the key to time which once again brings those age old enemies He-Man and the evil Skeletor into conflict.

That struggle between good and evil will be erupting across the silver screen after Christmas when the *Masters of the Universe* movie, starring mega hunk Dolph Lundgren – an awesome 6ft 6ins and 240lbs – as He-Man, goes on general release.

And now you can take part in that struggle with Gremlin Graphics' *Masters of the Universe* game based on the film.

The planet Eternia, familiar to all those who have seen the Masters of the Universe cartoon series, has been devastated by war. Skelator, that skull-faced incarnation of evil, and his equally awful henchwoman Evil-Lyn, are plotting to destroy the sorceress of Greyskulle Castle and rob her power.

Opposing this dastardly plot is He-Man, Gwildor, a genius dwarf (this is a new character you won't have seen on television) Teela and Man at Arms.

The film and the game open where Skeletor has imprisoned the sorceress and is absorbing her power. He-Man and friends arrive but fail to rescue her.

He-Man, Teela and Man-At-Arms retreat inside the hovel of Gwildor, who possesses a cosmic key – a







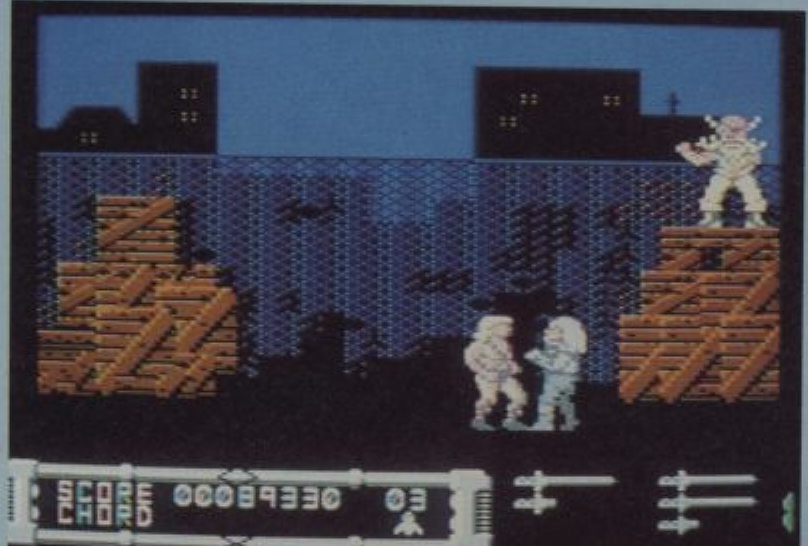
THE UNIVERSE

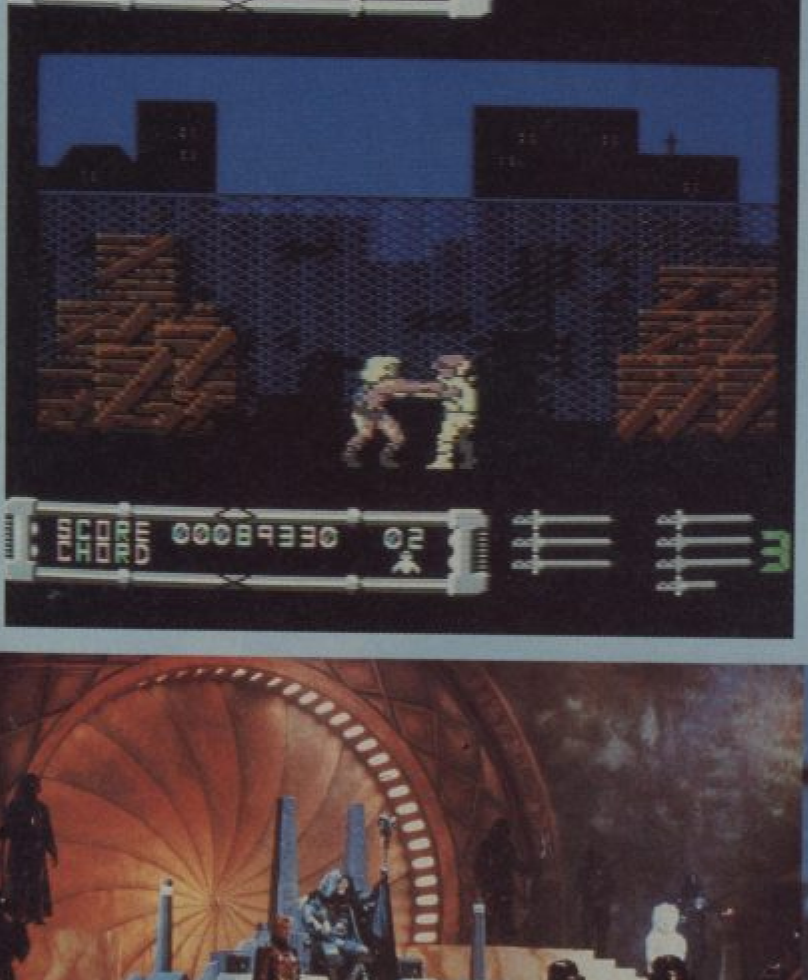
small cylindrical device that can magically transport them anywhere in the universe. Gwildor punches out a tonal code that will allow the group to exit the palace, but a stray bolt of power alters the location. The group disappears through a dimensional 'door'. Suddenly they are on the planet Earth, in a little Californian Town named Colby.

And that is really where the game begins.

On the way through time to Earth the key is lost and separated into eight musical chords. These have been scattered around the various playing areas which you, playing the part of He-Man, must find before the ultimate confrontation with Skeletor back on Eternia.

The game starts in the street with a shoot 'em up where, if you score enough points, you'll collect your first chord. This involves a lot of wandering about and being shot at. It struck me as a little aimless.





Having received a message from Teela that your services are required elsewhere, the scene zooms over to a scrap yard where you do battle with two of Skeletor's top henchmen, Blade and Karg. If you win, you're another chord better off.

With two chords under your belt, and having received another SOS, you find yourself on your way to Charlie's Electronic Store where, if you're clever, you'll collect another chord on the way and still have enough energy for a good shoot out when you get there! This time the action is sky high as you race to the top of a ladder and then onto your 'space disc' for the shoot out.

This is make or break: Will you claim victory or be outnumbered by Skeletor's troops? If you're taken prisoner, you'll be held captive at the infamous Castle of Greyskulle. If you haven't collected eight chords, Greyskulle has defeated you and his evil power will reign supreme. If you have eight, you have the right to challenge Skeletor.

Masters, for me lacks immediate playability to maintain interest. But if you're a fan of the cartoons or the film, you'll probably enjoy the game.

It's interesting that the previous Masters of the Universe game by US Gold has now been rereleased on the Americana label at a budget price.

That's quite good as well.

	CBM64	AMSTRAD
▶ GRAPHICS	7	7
▶ SOUND	8	7
▶ VALUE	8	8
▶ PLAYABILITY	7	7









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Little does he realise the awesome power he holds. Thinking it to be a musical instrument he fails to realise that every note he plays attracts the ruthless Skeletor and his devilish army led by the frightening powerful Evil-Lyn. With the key in their possesion who can stop them escaping downtown America and returning to create chaos in Eternia? Only one man can save earth from this evil domination as HE MAN meets Skeletor in the battle for Eternia, the final chapter that will seal the fate of mankind forever.

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It's that time again. The time when we ask you to vote for your favourite games and award them one of C+VG's world famous Golden Joystick Awards! Our joysticks are to computer games what the Oscars are to movies – in other words THE top award any software company can win.

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Once you've decided your winners, just fill in the award voting form and rush it to *Computer and Video Games*, Golden Joystick Awards, Priory Court, 30-32 Farringdon Lane, London EC1R 3AU. The first 20 vote forms out of the hat will receive a free game from the C+VG software cupboard – so get your entry in the post today! And remember – YOUR VOTES COUNT!

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Runner-up

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Runner-up

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Runner-up

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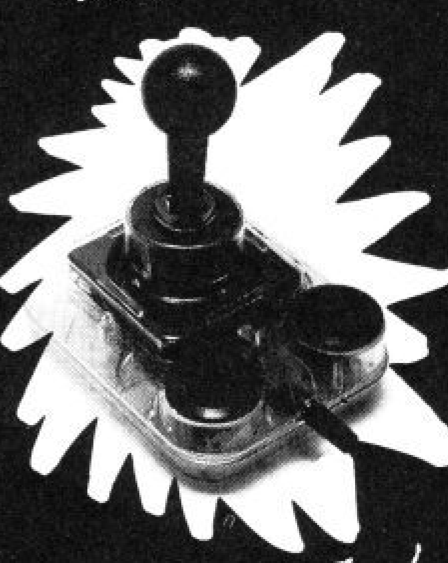
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ANOTHER ONE TO G

This is it! Another arm-aching, palm-sweating, finger-cracking, wrist-wrecking, cramp-creating, muscle-mangling, joint-jumping joystick round up.

And in general we've got a great crop of Value for Money joysticks out at the moment.

Right, first joysticks up for the heavy-handed C+VG zip and zap test are from Dynamics.



COMPETITION PRO EXTRA

The Comp Pro extra has been designed around the same specifications as the original Comp Pro 5000 joystick, except that it's translucent and incorporates an auto-fire and slow motion option. There are also a pair of micro switch fine buttons which give a greatly increased position.

Handling the joystick is easy and simple. It fits neatly between both hands, but may take some time until you become accustomed, and eventually comfortable with it.

To toggle between auto-fire, normal and slow motion, there is a small switch, which is located at the rear of the joystick base. It can be operated quickly and easily during gameplay. The Competition Pro Standard is still the best, and now that it includes both auto-fire and slow motion, it's a sure winner!

Price: £16.95.

COMPETITION PRO 5000

This was the joystick that started it all. Yep, that's right! The Pro 5000 has been the forefather of what all joysticks should be, sturdy, well-built, fully microswitched, highly responsive and extremely reliable.

The 5000 was the prototype for the Pro Extra and as its counterpart, is of the same design, but is red and black in colour. It is fully microswitched apart from the fire buttons, and has the same performance qualities and characteristics as the Pro Extra and there is also a clear version too. Another joystick which has just come to my attention, which looks identical to the Pro 5000, is actually a Taiwanese import and is constructed in such a way it can only be described as cheap! It can easily be recognised by looking at the rear of the joystick, there you will seen the words Micro Pro. As well as this, when moving the stick, it gives a stiff and rugged feel. This joystick should be avoided at all costs!

Price: £14.95 (Standard model)/ £15.95 (Clear model).



EUROMAX MICRO HANDLER

The Micro Handler is, I can only describe as, as an all purpose joystick, due to the fact, that it consists of a variety of joystick gadgets which include two paddles, an auto-fire switch, a couple of fire buttons and of course the joystick handle itself.

All of these are contained within a sturdy rectangular metal box, with four suction cups at it's base. It is easily positioned neatly and comfortably upon the lap, or can be placed on a table top and held steady, via the suction cups.

The joystick handle is a real beaut, with only one finger, it is possible to sway it easily, in all eight directions. To go with the auto-fire switch, is an auto-fire speed controller, which can speed up or slow down the pulse rate of the auto-fire mechanism.



The fire buttons are just that little bit dodgy. When using them in a rapid motion, they often become stuck, if pressed at an angle. The only way round this is, of course, to press them carefully. Overall, the Micro Handler is a must for all dedicated gamesters and is worthy of adding to your joystick collection.

Price: £24.95.

EUROMAX PROFESSIONAL

The Euromax Pro is probably the nearest thing, when it comes to quality and design, to the Competition Pro 5000. Design of the joystick is identical, apart from a few embosssed decorative and structured extras. The fire buttons are square, instead of round and is yellow and black in colour.

Joystick manoeuvrability is just great! Smooth, quick and incredibly simple. The fire buttons give superb response, and all microswitches give a loud noticable click, which I feel is very important, as it gives a much better reaction from your ear to your finger.



● Euromax Pro — smooth

There are two versions of the same joystick, one of these has an auto-fire option and the other one, you've guessed it, doesn't. The Professional has definitely got to be one of the best joysticks on the market, let's hope it stays that way!

Price: £15.95/£18.95 (Auto-fire)



CHECK OUT, BRAINS!

Joysticks, as everybody knows, are seriously crucial to playing computer games. C+VG's Ian "Brains" Machin and Tony Takoushi look at new joysticks for the Sega and Nintendo Mean machines.







● Euromax Elite – good value

EUROMAX ELITE

The Elite is quite a neat little joystick, and is one of the joysticks in Euromax's cheaper range and is worth every penny. It uses long lasting microswitches and sits quite well between both hands. The Elite would suit people with small hands and at £11.95 should be within the financial reach of the average game player.

It is red and black in colour and the fire button is positioned to the front of the joystick. The response quality from the Elite is not really up to the Professional's standard, but it's acceptable. As you may already know, C+VG has its own joystick with our neat little logo embossed on it.

Well, our joystick is really the Elite, cleverly in disguise! It's yellow and blue in colour. There is also an auto-fire and non-auto-fire versions of the Elite, but the C+VG joystick is a non auto-fire only.

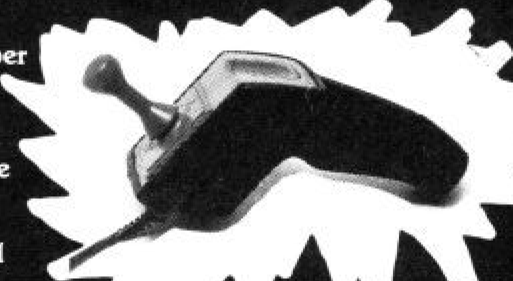
Price: £11.95/£15.95 (Auto-fire)

EUROMAX PRO ACE MICRO ACE

Both the Pro Ace and Micro Ace look exactly the same. The only difference is that the Pro ace is leaf switch operated and the Micro Ace uses microswitches.

Both look like mini pyramids and have a wide fire button at the front. The Micro Ace gives a relatively good feel and is quite accurate. The Pro Ace, because it uses leaf switches, requires excessive movements to create any response at all.

The price for the Pro Ace seems fair, although having to pay £12.95 for the Micro Ace, I'd rather save a quid and buy the Elite instead! Price: £8.95 (Pro-Ace)/£12.95 (Micro-Ace)



MASTERTRONIC MAGNUM

The Magnum is the ideal joystick for younger gamesters and can easily be held steady by small hands. It looks rather like a gun, except that there is no barrel. The trigger is on a slant and the stick is placed on top just beyond the trigger. It is fully microswitched and responds well to sudden movements. The fire button is nice and large.

The Magnum is ideal for a

Continued ▶

ANOTHER ONE TO CHECK OUT, BRAINS!

whole host of games, ranging from arcade adventures to super fast shoot 'em ups. Mastertronic have now reduced the price of their magnum to compete against the Speed Kings price cuts.

Price: £12.50.

SEGA AND NINTENDO

If you are the proud owner of either a Nintendo or a Sega console you will probably have felt quite a bit of frustration on using the controller pads that come with the units, writes Tony Takoushi.

This isn't to say they are no good, on some games they are ideal but GENERALLY they leave a lot to be desired. I went hunting around to see if there are any alternative joysticks that are compatible with the consoles. I found that Sega have released a new joystick (to be reviewed when I am sent one!) as well as a special trackball controller, I have yet to hear of Nintendo doing the same.

Other companies have seen the gap and have stepped in, Wico is well known for its arcade and home computer joysticks and now it has produced the Command Control for the Nintendo. A UK company, Konix has also released a contender in the Nintendo and Sega stakes with its specially fitted Speed King Joysticks.

The standard Sega and Nintendo joysticks are very similar in design and function. They both have A+B buttons and the joystick section is simply a press down pad that is thumb size. The Sega has a screw-in knob which gives the press down pad that is about a better feel but still remains fiddly and unbalanced in the hand.

Problems tend to occur on games where you need a fine control of diagonal position. For a game which require straight up/down/left/right the controller is OK.

As I said above the Nintendo has two alternatives, Wico or Konix. The Wico weighs in at a hefty 16 pounds (sterling!) and is not cheap. But you do get what you pay for, it is very rugged and is clearly built to last. As you can see from the picture the SELECT and START buttons are on top of the base unit with the fire button on the joystick handle, the B button is on either side of the base of the stick (good news for the left or right handers among you).

It has a four foot cord and the unit slips easily into your hand. The response is fast and smooth, and clearly Wico has employed the same design and quality thinking in this stick as in its other arcade and computer joysticks.

The Konix Speed King has been around for home computers and the console version retails for £12.99 which is quite a bit less than the Wico. It has a four foot cord, is designed to fit in the palm of your hand and boasts a shorter faster throw (stick movement), the fire button is well placed by your index finger.

Indeed, the joystick is well designed for your hand and has a fast feedback. The START and SELECT buttons are placed on top of the base unit and there is an auto-fire option on the rear end of the unit.

I quite enjoyed playing with the Speed King BUT real problems occurred when I had to use the B button in a game. This was because it was placed and it was very distracting trying to alternate between buttons. I also found the stability of the stick to be uneven and it tended to rock back and forth when I was in tight corners.





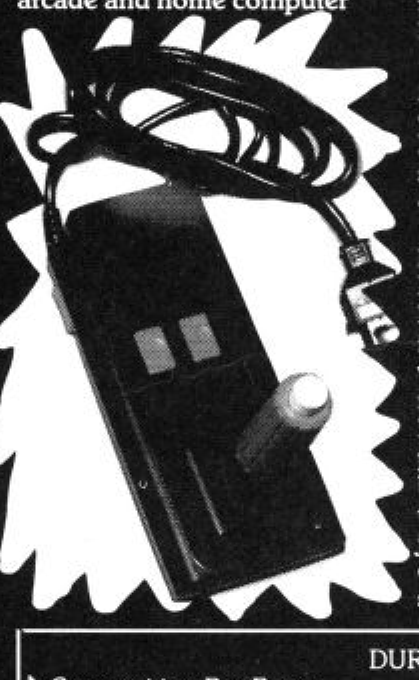
● Speed King

● Nintendo



● Sega





KONIX SPEEDKING

The Speedking comes in three versions for computers and games consoles.

The Speedking is probably the only joystick which has been designed, solely to fit perfectly into the hand, that is, into a big hand. It's design and size suggests that it can be held in the palm of a large hand. Therefore it is ideal for an adult, and may be found awkward for a child. The stick is easily manoeuvrable, responds well and can handle a considerable amount of frequent pounding.

It uses microswitches as does the fire button, which is situated to the right hand side of the grip.

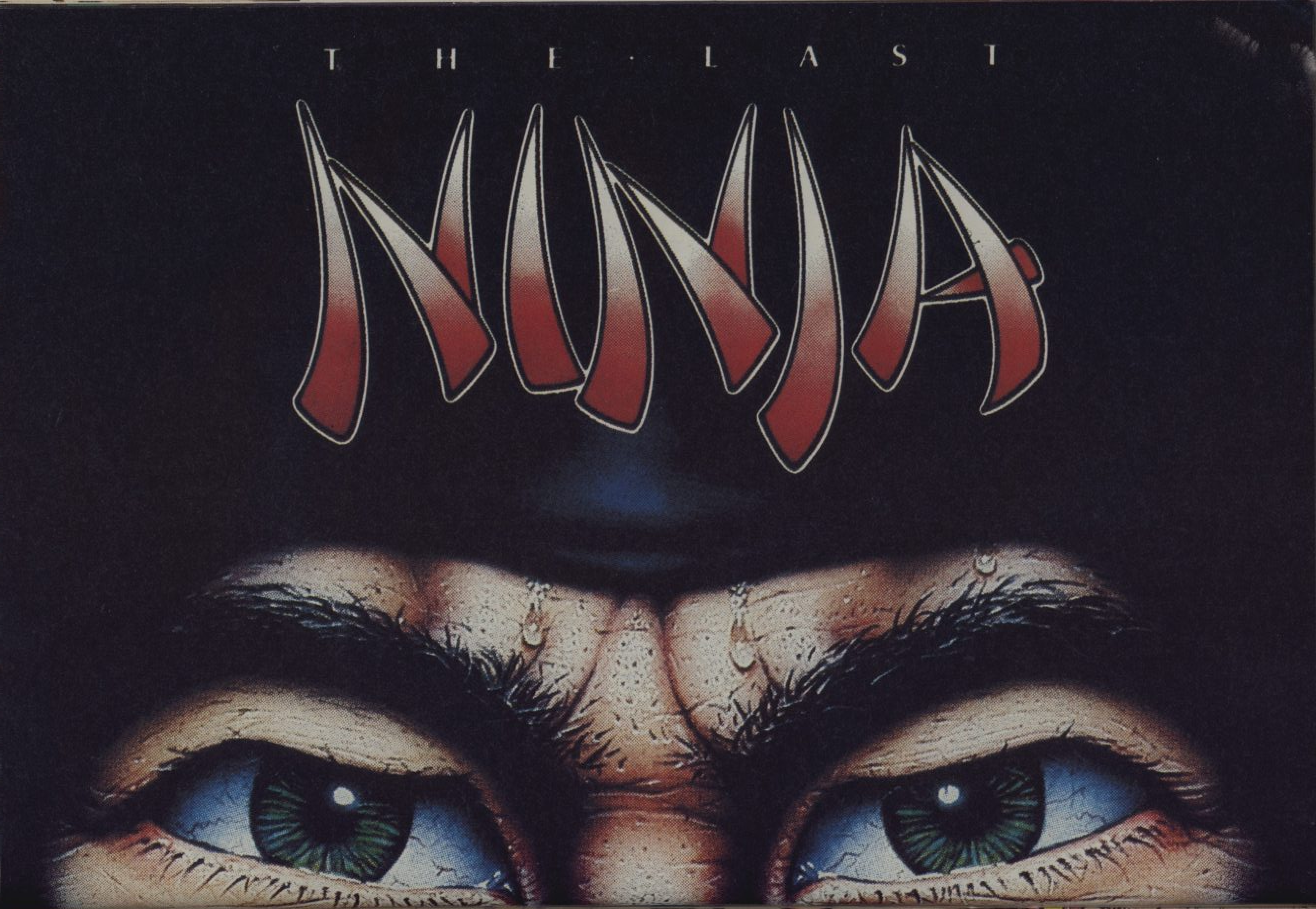
There are also two other versions of the Speedking for the Sega and Nintendo, each has all the features of the original Speedking, but include the necessary connections and triggers to make them compatible. At £11.99, plus the game Thing Bounces Back, the Speedking is even more value for money!

Price £11.99/£12.99 (Auto-fire).

	DURABILITY	DESIGN	VALUE FOR MONEY	IAN SAYS
▶ Competition Pro Extra	9	8	10	Excellent
▶ Competition Pro 5000	9	8	10	Excellent
▶ Micro Handler	9	10	9	Excellent
▶ Professional	9	8	10	Excellent
▶ Elite:C+VG	7	6	7	Average
▶ Pro Ace	7	5	7	Average
▶ Micro Ace	8	5	7	Average
▶ Speedking	8	8	8	Good
▶ Magnum	7	7	8	Good



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RED OCTOBER COMPETITION

Dive! Dive! Dive! Up periscope and fire all tubes. As you can tell we're all at sea on the good ship C+VG as we join in *The Hunt for Red October*, the excellent Argus submarine simulation based on Tom Clancy's best-selling book of the same name.

And you could be all at sea as well if you enter our faberoonie competition. The prize is a trip on a Royal Navy submarine. Unbelievable, eh? But be warned the competition is tough. This competition is also being run in Commodore User and Sinclair User and there can only be one winner.

The trip will be made on an Oberon Class Submarine (295 ft Long – 26.5 ft Deep – Displacement 2030 on the surface and 2410 tons when "dived" – carries 8 × 21 inch torpedo tubes and 24 torpedoes – 12 Knots on surface – 17 Knots dived – has a 9000 mile range and carries 69 crew composed 7 officers and 62 crew). No date is currently set for the trip and this will be planned with the winner when chosen. But the sub will sail from Gosport, Hants.

The ten runners up from C+VG will get copies of the game, either on 16-bit or 8-bit. So don't forget to tell us which computer you own.

Now for the hard part – the questions. They are harder than in normal C+VG competitions because the prize is so special. Okay, here we go.

1 Name Tom Clancy's follow-up to *The Hunt for Red October*.

Answer ________________

2 Where and what is the Reykjanes Ridge?

Answer ________________

3 What does *NATO* stand for?

Answer ________________

Send your answers together with the printed coupon to *The Hunt for Red October* competition, Computer + Video Games, Priory Court, 30-32 Farringdon Lane, London EC1R 3AU. The closing date is February 15th.

The Hunt for Red October Competition

Name ________________ Age ______

Address ________________

My computer is ________________

LONE

The Lone Wolf series of role-playing game books have so far notched up sales of 5.4 million worldwide. The eleventh book, The Prisoner of Time, was released in December and the final book, The Masters of Darkness, will be published next April. C+GV Deputy Editor Paul Boughton meets Lone Wolf creator Joe Dever.

If you wish to read this feature go to 1.

If you do not wish to continue go to 4.

1

Congratulations! Your decision to read on marks you down as a person with a questing mind, ready for new experiences, eager for action and a burning desire to take charge of your own destiny. For you need quick wits and swift reactions to survive fantasy role-playing books and, in particular, the world of Magnamund, against which the highly-successful *Lone Wolf* books are set.

If you wish to read about Lone Wolf's creator, then go to 5.

If you want to know what a game book is, then go to 13.

2

The first two Lone Wolf Books, *Flight from the Dark* and *Fire on the Water* are being turned into graphical adventures by Supersoft. The plot of the games will closely follow that of the books but Joe Dever says fans of the books who buy the games "will get something new." The games should be released in April on Spectrum, Commodore and Amstrad.

If you wish to read about the Lone Wolf board game, then go to 12.

If you wish to read about C+GV's Lone Wolf competition, then go to 15.

3

Lone Wolf is the last surviving Kai Lord. His peace-loving homeland, Sommerlund, was plunged into war when a vast army of the Darklands suddenly invaded. All the Kai Lords – save Lone Wolf – were killed. He vowed vengeance on the killers. All Kai Lords are skilled in various disciplines such as camouflage, hunting, tracking, healing and weapons, they also have a sixth sense which alerts them to imminent danger.

If you wish to read about the world of Magnamund, then go to 8.

If you wish to read about the Lone Wolf Club, then go to 10.

4

Your decision to stop reading means you have no staying power and, even worse, you've probably missed out on another great C+VG competition.

If you have changed your mind and wish to continue, go to 1.

If you really have finished then turn over the page.

5

Joe Dever, creator of the Lone Wolf books, was born in 1956 in Woodford, Essex. So far he has published eleven books about the character and the world of Magnamund. The twelfth and last in the series will be available next April.

Years of playing adventure games and a taste for the books of Tolkien and Michael Moorcroft inspired Joe to create his own fantasy world.

After leaving college, Joe became a musician playing what he calls "lift" music and then worked as a recording engineer with Virgin Records. In 1977 while working in Los Angeles Joe first encountered *Dungeons and Dragons*. "It was then in its infancy," says Joe, "but I saw the potential and got into playing the game." From then on he was hooked on concept, content and its future.

And five years later, in 1982, Joe won the Advanced Dungeons and Dragons championships held before 16,000 people at Origins, the major US game convention held in Baltimore. He was the only British competitor.

But before that triumph, back in England, Joe started to run D+D games for the bands who were recording at Virgin's Manor Studios in Oxfordshire.

"It was while playing games that I started to develop my own world for an adventure to take place in and documented it.

The world he created was vast and complex, with its own myths, legends, heroes, villains, races, animals and languages. Originally Joe intended this world to form the background to his own fantasy game. Eventually it was to become the world of Magnamund and background to Lone Wolf.

If you want to know more about Magnamund, then go to 8.

If you want to know about Joe, then go to 7.

6

Joe Dever has also written four books in a series called *Combat Heroes*. Each book in the series can be played as a solo adventure or when combined with its companion book, two people can play a combat "duel".

If you wish to read about the Lone Wolf computer games, then go to 2.

If you wish to finish reading this feature, go to 4.

7

The advent of punk rock saw Joe make the decision to quit the music business. The Sex Pistols and New Wave music wasn't for him. It was a momentous decision. He ended up running a games shop in London where he met game designer and illustrator Gary Chalk.

If you want to know more about Gary Chalk, then go to 16.

If you want to know more about Joe, then go to 9.

8

The Lone Wolf series of books are set in the vast and complex fantasy world of Magnamund. Joe Dever has invented more than i2.6r18,000 years of its history, geography, nations, creatures, myths, legends and gods. Together with Gary Chalk, Joe Dever produced *The Magnamund Companion*, a lavishly illustrated guide to this fantasy land. It's a must for those captivated by the Lone Wolf books and is published by Beaver Books at £6.95.

If you wish to read about Joe Dever's new *Highway Warrior* books, then go to 14.

If you wish to read about the Lone Wolf computer games, turn to 2.

9

Role playing games have always had a "cult" following. Joe wanted his adventure to have more appeal. The paperback game books would be ideal. "Paperback distribution is mass market but fantasy is a minority".

Drawing on the 18,000 years of history he created for his game, Joe set about writing the first Lone Wolf book. Gary Chalk illustrated it.

"I wrote the first book in two weeks of holiday. I went to a house in Cornwall on my own with lots of paper and a typewriter," says Joe.

The success of Ian Livingstone and Steve Jackson's *Fighting Fantasy* books and alerted publishers to this new sort of idea. "I picked three of the top publishers and they all wanted it," says Joe. In the end it was Sparrow Books, part of Hutchinsons, which signed him up.

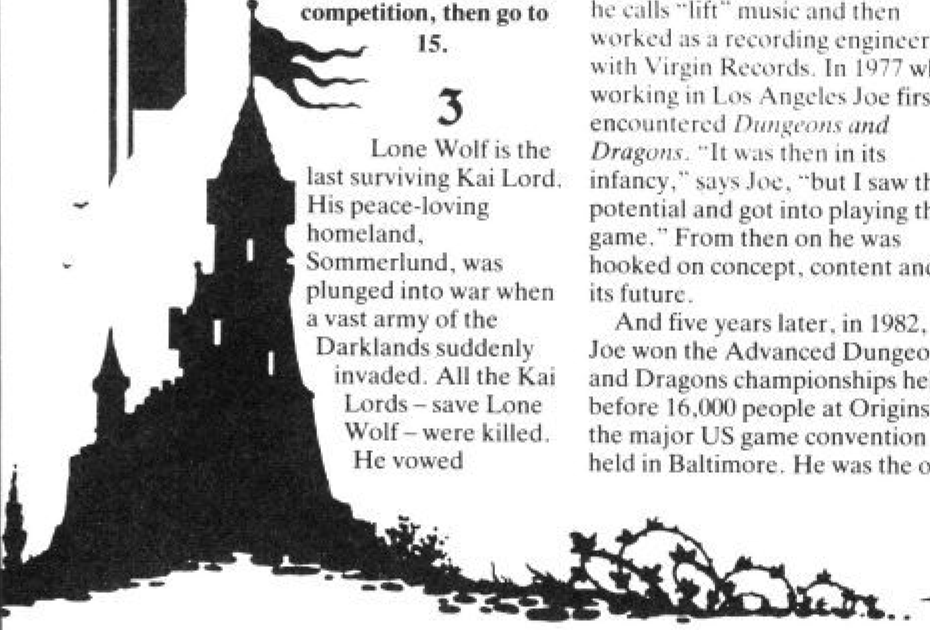
The first book was an instant success and the other books soon followed. Lone Wolf books won Gamebook of the Year awards in 1985, 1986 and 1987.

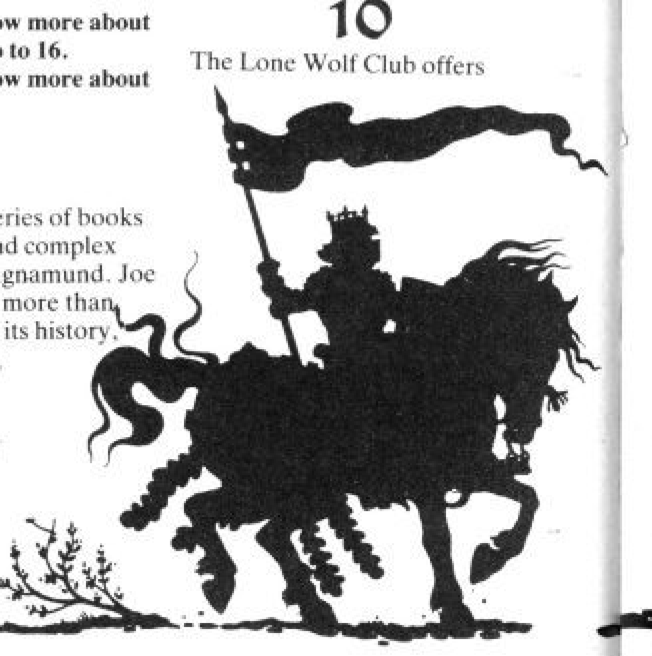
If you want to know about how Joe writes the books, then go to 11.

If you want to know about Joe's future plans then go to 14.

10

The Lone Wolf Club offers





WOLF

readers the chance to become more involved with the fantasy world. Joe writes a regular newsletter to members and the club offers competitions, events and the chance to collect Lone Wolf Souvenirs and signed copies of the books.

Joe also hosts special adventure games for club members at his home. Those lucky enough to be invited get the chance to see Joe's 20ft by 20ft games room and his collection of 18,000 fantasy and historical gaming figures. Joe reckons it is one of the biggest collections in Britain.

If you are interested in joining the Lone Wolf Club then write to The Lone Wolf Club, Beaver Books, Brookmount House, 62-65 Chandos Place, London WC2N 4NW. Do not forget to enclose a large stamped addressed envelope. Sorry but club membership is open to people in the UK and British Forces Posted Overseas.

If you wish to stop reading this feature, go to 4.

If you want to read about Joe's future plans, then go to 14.

11

From the start, Joe saw the Lone Wolf series running for 12 books. "I plan the books as a series rather than just as one offs. I know the whole story. I then break it down into the books, each with its own climax. I then simply write it."

Joe makes it sound incredibly easy. But it is tremendously hard work getting the books down on paper. He says: "On average I'm doing five to six books a year. It's quite a demanding lifestyle but it has its rewards. I get over 100 letters a week. It's nice to know millions are enjoying the series. But I work six days a week and sleep on the seventh."

If you wish to read about the Lone Wolf Club, then go to 10.

If you want to enter C+VG's Lone Wolf competition, then go to 15.

12

A board game featuring Lone Wolf will be available in April. But, says Joe, "it is not just targeted at fantasy fans but he hopes it will have a broader appeal.

If you want to read about the Lone Wolf computer games, then go to 2.

If you wish to read about Lone Wolf, then go to 3.

13

The wonderful thing about game playing books is that the reader plays the hero and main character. Your decisions are his decisions. Whether you succeed in completing the book's quest or task is up to you.

Normally you can equip yourself with a selection of weapons and skills. Every so often you are confronted with decisions, battles or puzzles and a series of options for you to chose from – just like this feature. Will you do this or that? The decision you take could send you off into another part of the adventure, end it immediately, or allow you to progress. During the adventure decisions you make will earn you points in, say combat skill or endurance. When you have to battle with some person, monster or creature the outcome could depend on your current points status. The skills and points earned in one book can be carried over into the next book of the series. But at the same time you do not have to play the first book in a series to enable you to enjoy subsequent books.

If you wish to read about Lone Wolf, go to 3.

If you wish to read about Joe Dever's other role playing game books, then go to 6.

14

The twelfth and final Lone Wolf Book, *The Masters of Darkness*, will be published in April. But Joe Dever fans need not despair. He is already hard at work on his next game book series called *Highway Warrior*, set in Texas in the year 2020 following a post-nuclear holocaust. The disaster was caused not through war but by terrorism. The reader plays the part of Calphoenix who must hunt down the bad guys. Joe says the series will be a cross between *The Grapes of Wrath and Mad Max.*

The first book in the series is called *Freeway Firestorm* and is due to be published in July, he is contracted to write four books and there is an option on four more.

After the first for *Highway Warrior* books have been published Joe plans to return to Lone Wolf with what he describes as a "grandmaster" series which, he says, will take the character to a "higher level of confrontation – talking to the gods."

If you wish to read about the planned Lone Wolf computer games, go to 2.

If you wish to read about the Lone Wolf board game, go to 12.

15

Computer + Video Games has got 12 signed copies of Joe Dever's latest Lone Wolf Book, *The Prisoners of Time* to give away as competition prizes.

All you have to do to be in with a chance of winning is answer the following Lone Wolf questions in the special panel.

16

Gary Chalk was the first illustrator for the Lone Wolf books, although other artists now provide the illustrations. Gary was born in 1952 and began playing war games at the age of 15. His interest in gaming led him to be involved in the creation of several games including *Cry Havoc*, *Starship Captain* and *Battlecars*,



▲ *Joe Dever*

on which he worked with Fighting Fantasy man Ian Livingstone.

If you want to know more about Magnamund, then go to 8.

If you want to read Lone Wolf books, then go to 17.

17

The Lone Wolf series of books consists of 12 titles: *Flight from the Dark, Fire on the Water, The Caverns of Kalte, The Chasm of Doom, Shadow on the Sand, The kingdoms of Terror, Castle Death, The Jungle of Horrors, The cauldron of Fear, The Dungeons of Togar, The Prisoners of Time* and *The Master of Darkness*. They are published by Beaver Books and are available from all good bookshops.

If you wish to know about the *Magnamund Competition*, then go to 8.

If you wish to know about C+VG's Lone Wolf Competition, then go to 15.

LONE WOLF COMPETITION

1 How many books are there in the Lone Wolf series?
Answer ....
2 What is the name of Joe Dever's new series of books?
Answer ....
3 Which company is producing the Lone Wolf computer game?
Answer ....
4 Where was Joe Dever born?
Answer ....

Send you answers together with the printed coupon to Lone Wolf Competition, Computer + Video Games, Priory Court, 30-32 Farringdon Lane, London EC1R 3AU. The closing date is February 16 and the editor's decision is final.

NAME ....

....

AGE ....

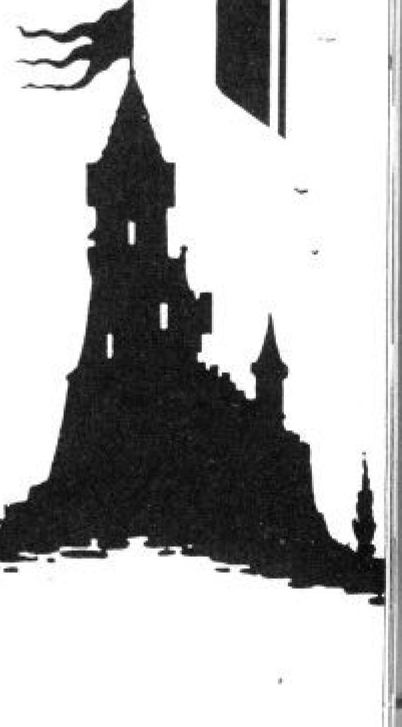
ADDRESS ....

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If you don't know the answers go to 1.

If you wish to know about the Lone Wolf computer games, then go to 2.



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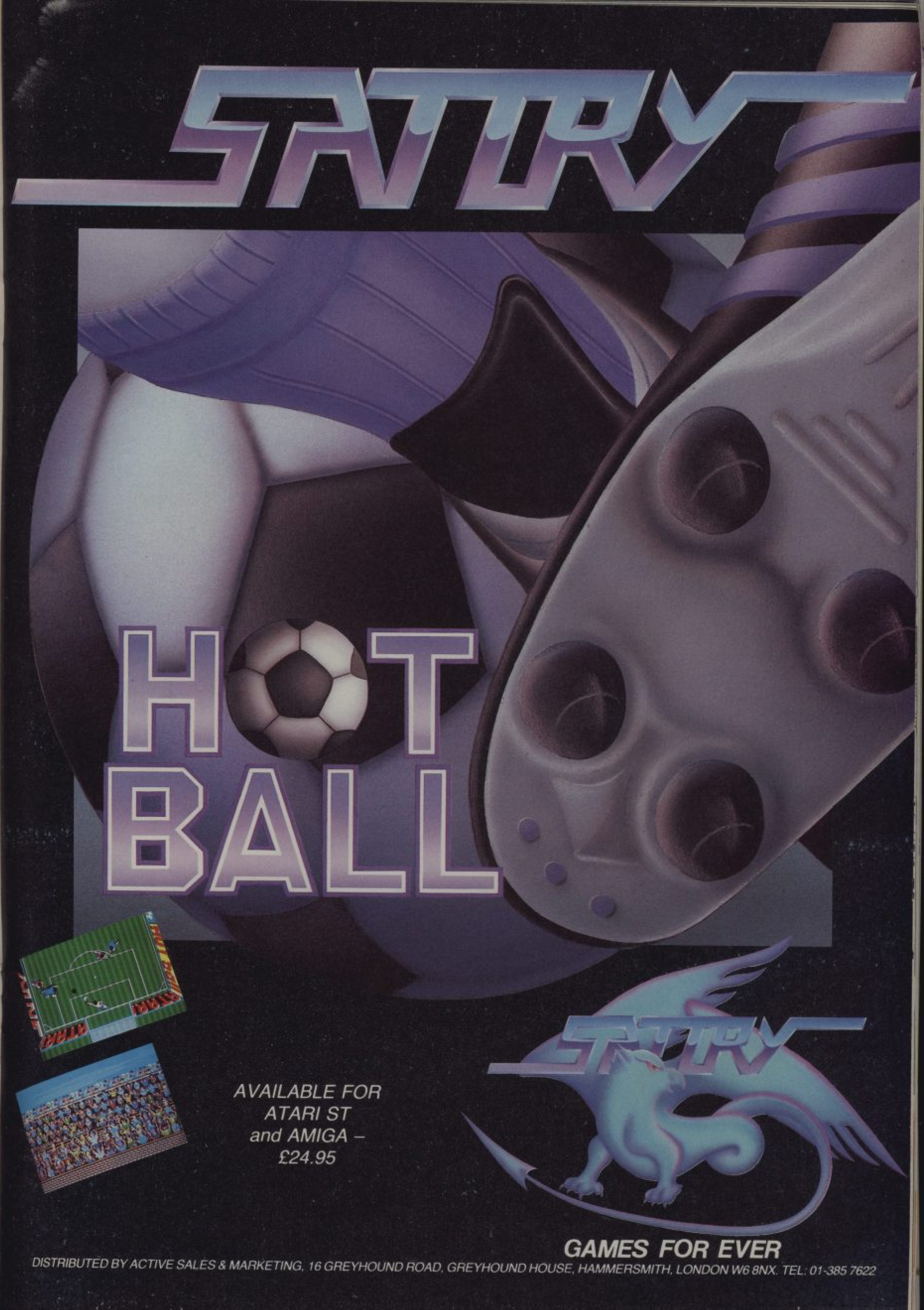
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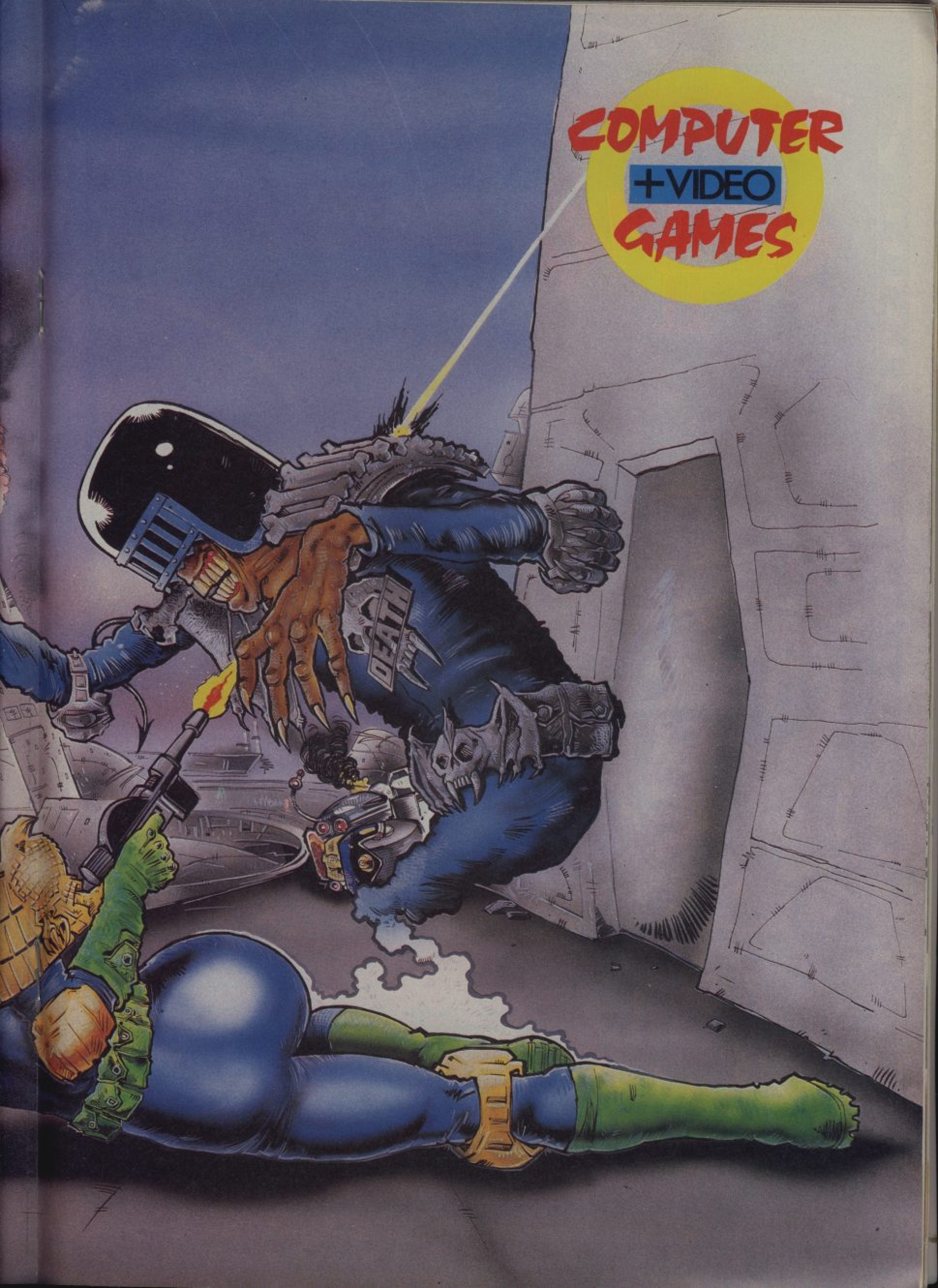
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The Big Screen

Time to cop this month's cinematic treats and root out the odd criminal. Ward R Street acts as judge and jury.

The time – the day after tomorrow. The place – Old Detroit. The number one problem – crime! Forget your friendly neighbourhood bobby. Move over Crockett and Tubbs. What we need now is **Robocop (18).**

Thirty-one cops have been killed since the privatisation of the Detroit police force. Murphy makes it thirty-two when he runs into a deserted warehouse in hot pursuit of the slimiest gang of sleazos outside of the C+VG staff, and is promptly gunned down.

But the corpse carried out in a body bag is about to be reborn as a law enforcement officer with a difference – a PC (Police Constable) who is fifty per cent PC (Personal Computer). Programmed to keep the peace he's an officer on the beat who beats up the bad guys with ruthless efficiency.

In no time at all the crime rate drops, but a Robocop's lot is not a 'appy one. The gangsters are plotting their revenge and worse, the boss of OmniConsumer Products plans to tarnish the stainless android's reputation to give his own pet project, ED 209, a crack at the cop market. He's not averse to a little criminality either.

Robocop was a summer smash in the States and it's easy to see why. Comic book violence combined with comedy and some satirical sideswipes produces a perfect piece of fun sci-fi.

The pace never slackens as thrills mix with laughter. But at its centre the movie has a serious point about dehumanized policing and the cost of law and order when it's governed by profits. Join your neighbourhood watch and watch out for **Robocop!**

Even a 16-bit rozzer would have trouble with the **Lost Boys (15)** though. It's not so much that this motley crew of punks, death rockers and heavy metal freaks have what the Americans call an 'attitude



▲ Robocop

problem' – it's that they're all vampires!

Santa Carla is a small Californian seaside town complete with fun fair, boardwalk and a bloodsucker problem. New boy in town Michael soon falls for their beautiful acolyte Star, and it's not long before he's eating maggots and drinking blood from a wine bottle.

Unluckily mother is too busy looking for a new job and possibly a new husband to observe these anti-social habits, but younger brother Sam soon twigs that something's wrong when Michael flies by his window to ask him out for a bite! Cue Santa Carla's two teen vampire hunters, the Frog brothers, dab hands with a stake cooked in garlic.

I wouldn't say that **Lost Boys** lost its way, but it's an odd mix of comedy and suspense. There's real wit in the script but it's delivered deadpan (whoops), so at times you're not sure whether to laugh or barf.

Still, the mostly teenage cast is universally excellent, the



▲ Robocop

soundtrack, featuring INXS and Echo and the Bunnymen is superb, and it's all directed with real style. Don't lose sight of these boys.

More gory goings on in **Near Dark (18)** but there are no doubts as to director Kathryn Bigelow's intentions. She wants to scare you senseless!

Obviously the supernatural's been at work in Hollywood because here we have yet another group of seedy vampires who kidnap yet another ordinary teenager when he falls for a girl member of the gang. But there the similarities end because Caleb is soon spirited away from his Mid-Western farm in the back of a blacked out camper van.

How would vampires live in modern America? Bigelow thinks that they'd trek across the States, stopping off at anonymous motels, picking up passing hitchikers or thumbing rides, then slaughtering their victims. Every so often they might terrorise a secluded bar, just for kicks.

It's a bloodsucking life-style that clean-living Caleb finds hard to swallow (double whoops). The undead aren't too taken by his squeamishness either, and it's only Mae, feeding him from her own veins, who stops them dumping their newest disciple.

Near Dark is a dark and brooding film indeed, possessed of a terrible intensity which makes you squirm in your seat. Despite the intrusion of sunlight towards the end, it should still give real gore fans something to get their teeth into.

What would these fantasy ghouls make of the **Gardens of Stone (15)** which are the setting for Francis Coppola's major new movie. That's the name given to Arlington



▲ Near Dark

National Cemetery, the resting place of so many soldiers killed in Vietnam.

No, you cry, not another Vietnam movie, but wait . . . Coppola has already taken the trip to South-East Asia in *Apocalypse Now*. This time he never leaves Washington – yet manages to say more about that senseless war than any of the other recent 'Nam pics.

The action centres on new soldier Private Willow and a veteran of two spells of duty, Sergeant Hazard. Both are members of the 'Old Guard', the regiment which stands tall

and proud on ceremonial occasions but which seldom sees action.

In the 1960s most of those ceremonials were funerals. As Hazard remarks, "The Marines say that killing is their business and that business is good. Well, our business is better." But despite the experienced officer's belief that the war can never be won, Willow is determined to serve in the front-line.

By studying these two men, their personal ambitions, their fellow soldiers and even their girlfriends, Coppola creates a picture of a military machine which presents a public face of heel-clicking, choreographed efficiency, but which really exists to ship young men overseas to kill and be killed.

The performances are brilliant, with James Caan as the all-too-human Sergeant Hazard and newcomer D.B. Sweeney as Willow, supported by James Earl Jones as Hazard's foul-mouthed brother officer and Anjelica Huston as his pacifist girl. Its power lies in the way it deals with human beings who we identify with, who we care about.

More military antics and political corruption as Kevin Costner (of *The Untouchables*) finds that there's **No Way Out (15)** when he's framed for murder.

This is one of those films which is difficult to describe without giving away too much of the plot. It twists and turns like the labyrinth of tunnels below the Pentagon, in which it's set.

Costner is navy hero Tom Farrell, who becomes involved with glamorous Susan Atwell at a party. They start to see each other but she's also involved with Farrell's superior, David Brice – a great performance by Gene Hackman. Murder follows, and the cover up by Brice and his

▼ No Way Out



aide unwittingly involves Farrell in a race for his life.

It's a clever thriller which makes good use of the classic suspense plot, an innocent man drawn deeper and deeper into a web of intrigue. There's an unexpected final twist, but perhaps the whole thing looks a little too contrived in the long run.

An even older story forms the basis of **China Girl (18).** Its Italian American hero and heroine from China Town are surely blood relatives of Romeo and Juliet.

That's blood by the bucketfull, which isn't really surprising as the director is Abel Ferrara, the man responsible for the notorious 'nasty', Driller Killer. He's lost none of his talent for scenes of suspense and menace, shooting around New York's infamous Canal Street, but he also knows how to portray a



▲ Woo-Woo Kid

touching love story.

Tony meets Tyan at a rock club and falls for her immediately but their romance lights the fuse for a gang war, led by Tony's hot-headed friends and Tyan's brother. Add a touch of Tongs and a gaggle of Godfathers and the scene is set for a bloodbath, in which innocence is an inevitable casualty.

The love story is carefully balanced by the reckless gangs and the machinations of the mobsters. Abel is a more than able director and his film has a real feel of streets so mean you can almost smell the fear.

Problems of the heart also occupy **The Woo-Woo Kid (PG)** – and no, I couldn't make any sense of the title at first, either! But all becomes obvious when Sonny Wisecarver starts to woo women twice his age.

Nowadays toy-boys may be commonplace – at least in the



▲ Gardens of Stones

newspapers – but in 1944, 14 year-olds dated girls of their own age. Not so Sonny. First he runs away with a 21 year-old neighbour whose husband beats her. Then, when they've been rounded up by the police and returned home, he does the same with a woman in her thirties.

The strange thing is that Sonny isn't especially attracted to older women – he just tends to get mixed up with them, thanks to an over-optimistic belief that everything will turn out right. Naturally they don't, and he even becomes a national celebrity when the papers pick up on his exploits.

Based on a true story, **Woo-Woo** is one of the freshest comedies imaginable. Sonny, played by Patrick Dempsey, stumbles through his romantic adventures with a bland innocence. Meanwhile his unworldly mother and a father, who sends him to the dog-house – literally! – provide an amusing backdrop of eccentric homelife.

Don't let the fact that this is a story about being in love put you off. It's hysterically funny, creates a wonderful sense of growing up during the last days of World War Two, and takes a few shots at society's hypocrisy along the way. A film to fall in love with!

The only people who'll take to **Tough Guys Don't Dance**



▲ King Lear

(18) are turkey-fanciers though. Written and Directed by American author Norman Mailer this mess of melodramatic action succeeds in being so totally inept that it's actually funny.

Ryan O'Neal spends the film wandering round looking soulful – it's either that or chronic indigestion – as strange things occur in a small New England town. Every line is loaded with significance and spoken as if it's deep and meaningful. The plot twists and turns so many times that it takes a flashback to explain it!

Tough Guys never dances at all – it's got two left feet. But don't miss it if you're into truly awful films!

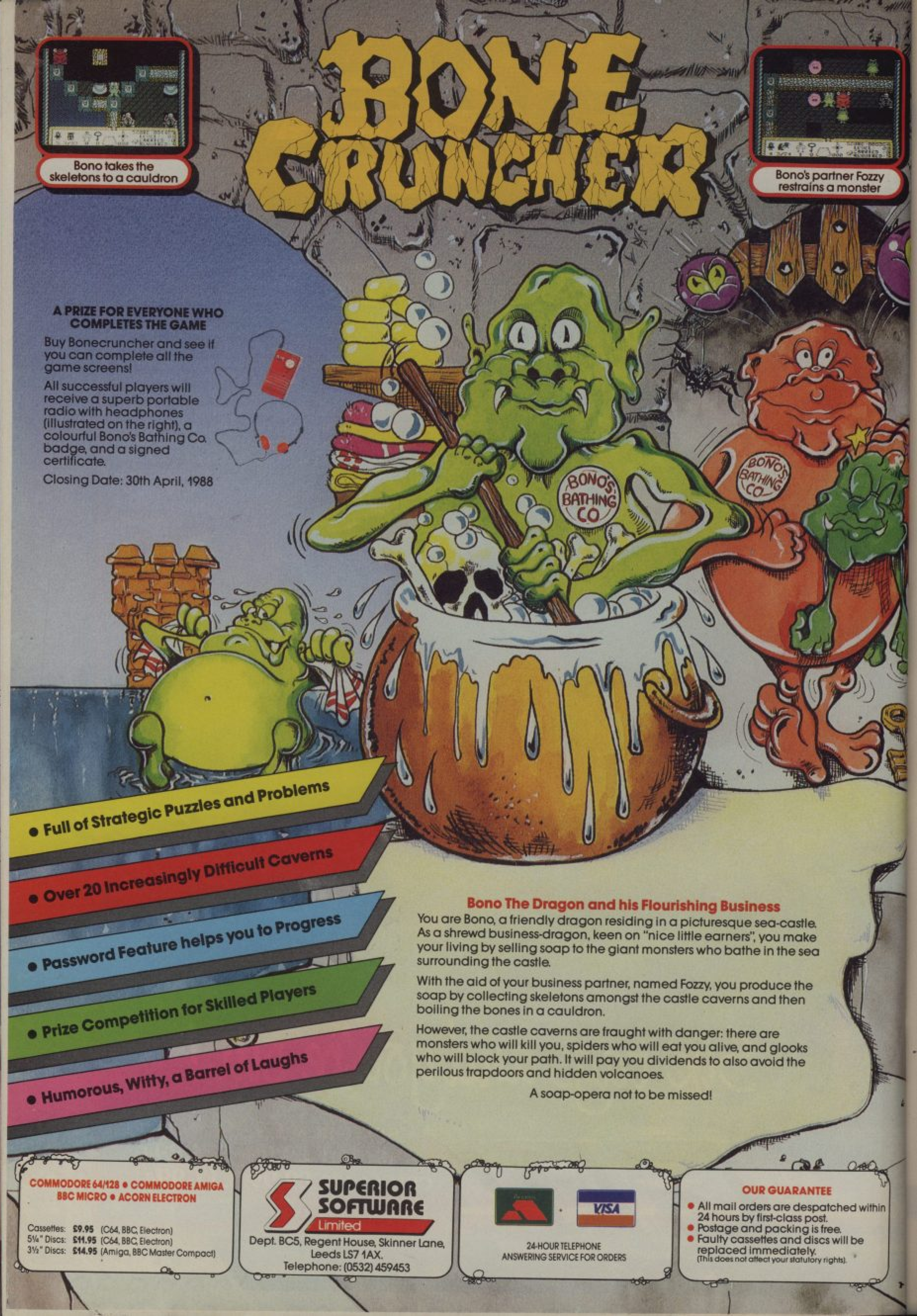
There are those who will say that Jean-Luc Goddard's **King Lear (15)** is god-awful too. I don't agree – but I wouldn't recommend it unless you've spent at least three years at a French university. This is not Shakespeare's play but a film about the impossibility of making a film of it! Comprenez vous?

What – I've not named my film of the month! I was hoping you wouldn't mention that. It's almost impossible to pick one from this excellent batch of releases.

If you're into sheer fun, **Robocop** is arresting stuff. But the more serious **Gardens of Stone** is one from the heart. And **The Woo-Woo Kid** is a wow, despite the title.



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NEXt MONth

Have I got news for you. Next month C&VG will hit the streets with several improvements that you have asked for. You said you wanted more reviews and we are going to give them to you – Twice as many as before, with a revamped marks system, and stacks more screen shots.

16 BLITZ – If you have just bought an Atari ST or Commodore Amiga then you just can't afford to miss this one. The games are piling up and our reviewers were busy playing them during the Christmas pudding season – so get yourself in the know by reading them.

Shuck and Doode cut up rough on the London Underground.

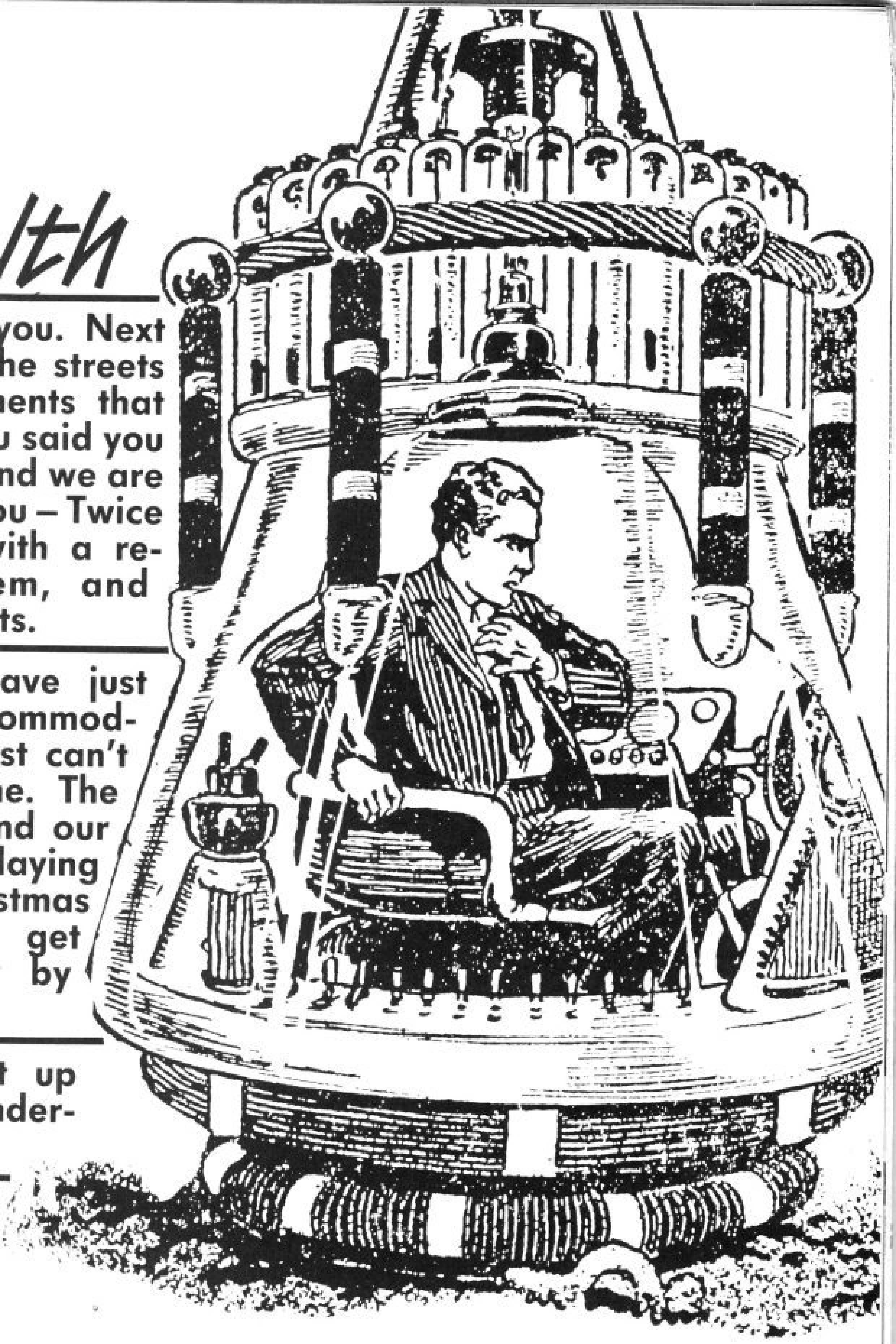
Mean Machines is better than ever with the latest batch of cartridges hot off a plane from Japan.

EYE – Win the whole kaboosh – the book, the game the t shirt Zzzzzz.

FREE pull-out poster.

Golden Joysticks – latest news on how the voting is going.

OuT oN tHe 15tH FebRuarY



Dear Mr Newsagent, Avoid a visit from Shuck and Doode and reserve me a copy of Computer + Video Games, March issue!

Name________________

Address________________

● Hurtle into the future with February's C+VG out on February 15th. It's hotter than hell… in a cool sort of way.

TARTAN

What do a Scottish Earl, a budget software company and extremely fast cars have in common? Computers, that's what. Johnny Dumfries is one of the best young British racing drivers around, and lately he's been seen in the company of Code Masters and their Grand Prix Simulator game – currently sitting pretty at the top of the software charts. But there's more to computers and motor-racing than playing games. C+VG went to find out what.

"Playing *Grand Prix Simulator* requires accuracy and finesse," says Johnny Dumfries, "just like driving a real race car." And he should know. Johnny's racing career spans 100cc karts, Formula Ford single seaters, up to a Formula One Lotus and the frighteningly powerful Jaguar sports cars.

He got involved with Code Masters when the Darling Brothers approached him to endorse their *Grand Prix Simulator* product. Johnny liked the people and the game and decided that the deal was for him.

Johnny is well aware of computers – but not because they add to his sponsorship deals. Microprocessors play an increasingly important part in modern racing cars. They control the engine management system, look after the suspension and can even tell you if you're got a flat tyre.

The Jaguar Johnny drove last season had special sensors fitted which relayed tyre temperatures back to the cockpit. Johnny could use this to check tyre wear and watch out for slow punctures.

If one tyre starting getting very hot all of a sudden there was a high probability of a flat, so he could head for the pits and change the offending bit of rubber. This information is crucial in long distance races and could be the difference between winning and coming nowhere.

At Le Mans last year Johnny drove the 24-hour race in a Mercedes with a complex computer controlled engine management system which allowed him access to all kinds of information about the performance of his car. As he belted along the long Mulsanne straight – the only part of the track where he could relax for a while – he could call up info about how much fuel he was using and even how fast he should go to make the fuel last until his next pit stop or until the chequered flag.

You've all seen the consequences for drivers who ignore the computers advice on TV – and it must be really embarrassing having to push your car over the finish line!

Most cars also transmit information to their pit crew once







a lap as they speed past the pits a microwave pulse from a computer in the pits triggers the on board microprocessor to cough up all its data. That way the engineers and designers can keep an eye on their cars performance during a race.

Johnny has also driven an active suspension Corvette in the States. Active suspension means that each of the corner of the car responds independently to the road surface it encounters making the ride much smoother. But all

TERROR

this has to be controlled by a chip to make the machine driveable!

This technology, already used by the Lotus and Williams Formula One teams will soon be seen on normal road cars.

This year Johnny will be driving full time for the Jaguar endurance racing team. Despite his past Grand Prix experience none of the top Formula One teams offered him a drive – which is their loss because Mr Dumfries is destined to be a World Champ. But the Darling/ Dumfries is all set to continue with potential new projects coming continuing their tie-up this year.



JOHNNY DUMFRIES FACT FILE

John Colum Crichton – Stuart, Earl of Dumfries, is recognised as one of Britain's brightest new stars in Grand Prix racing.

Starting in 100cc Karts in 1980, he quickly graduated to Formula Three in 1983. The following year with backing from British Petroleum he totally dominated the Marlboro British Formula Three Championship, taking the title with ten wins and in addition finishing runner up in the European Championship.

The evidence of his outstanding talent did not go unnoticed by the Grand Prix team managers and offers to test their cars came from the top teams. By the end of 1984 he had tested for Williams, Lotus, Brabham and McLaren.

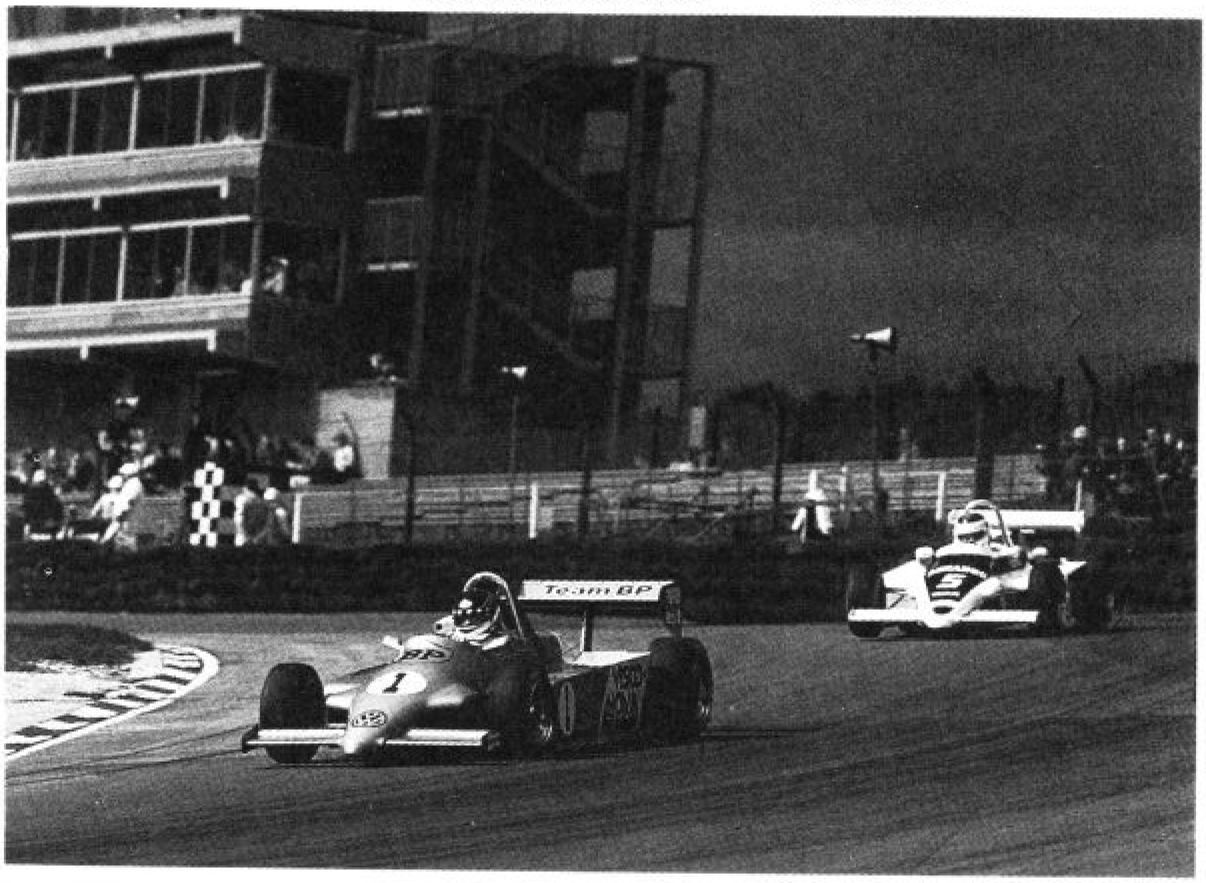
The beginning of 1985 brought an offer from another famous team, Ferrari. It was Ferrari who persuaded Dumfries to sign an exclusive testing contract for the factory Formula One team. The first British driver to sign such a contract since 1968.

1986 saw Dumfries invited to join Ayrton Senna in the prestigious Team Lotus line up for his first full Grand Prix season. The first race of the season, the Brazilian Grand Prix, was a promising start with the new recruit running as high as fifth place before being sidelined with mechanical problems.

Although poor mechanical reliability was to keep him out of the top placings on other occasions, his determination and the efforts of his dedicated race crew were to ensure that he finished the season with world championship points.

Finishing fifth in Hungary and sixth in Australia.

Last year he drove for six different teams in the World Endurance Championship, including the Kouros Mercedes Sauber team and Jaguar – eventual championship winners. In 1988 he will again drive for the Jaguar team.





JOHNNY DUMFRIES CODE MASTERS COMPETITION

We've got 20 copies of **Code Masters'** *Grand Prix Simulator* game to GIVE away to C+VG readers. The game is available for the Spectrum, Commodore and Amstrad. *Grand Prix Simulator* features a two-player option with 14 circuits, involving bridges, oil patches, chicanes, all the excitement of a real-life top flight motor race. All you have to do is answer these three simple Grand Prix quiz, fill in the coupon and rush it to Computer + Video Games, Code Masters Comp, Priory Court, 30-32 Farringdon Lane, London EC1R 3AU. Closing date is February 16th, normal C+VG rules apply and the team managers decision is final. Watch for the green light – then GO! The first five correct answers out of the crash hat will get a special Code Masters baseball hat!

C+VG GRAND PRIX QUIZ

1. Name the 1987 Formula One World Champion.
2. Alain Prost now holds the record for the most Grand Prix wins. How many races has he won?
3. Which team does Britain's top F1 driver Nigel Mansell drive for?

C+VG/CODEMASTERS COMPETITION

Name ______________________

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____

My answers are:

1. ______________________

2. ______________________

3. ______________________

Computer owned (tick box)
Spectrum ☐ Amstrad ☐ C64 ☐

FOOTBALL DIRECTOR

● Screen Scene

D&H GAMES
Commodore 64/128
Price £8.95

After a weekend in which I watched my beloved QPR rise to the top of Division One, what more could I want than a good whirl at a football game — wrenching Football Director from a disillusioned Mike Pattenden's hands I was off. Football Director is the first offering I've seen from this soccer crazed software house in Stevenage, so it was with a certain degree of curiosity that I cast my eye over this.

The packaging was the first thing to catch my eye. It seems to bear a very strange likeness to Imagine's Super Soccer, still ... mustn't grumble. Whilst loading up the game I thought I'd have a customary read of the instructions only to find there weren't any, nothing other than an extensive list of the game's features, and a guide to the prices you can expect to pay for players.

When you have chosen your team (QPR naturally) you may then either change any other team names (try Q.P.R. to Donkey — Ed) and then on to the main menu. The game is controlled by pressing the initial letter of the option you wish to use. The options are:

Play Match: get stuck in there, the moment of truth. Can your boys in the league do what they did in training? Only choose this when you are satisfied you have selected your strongest squad, as once you've kicked off you cannot make any other changes for ninety minutes. The match is shown with the two teams names written on screen, and the clock ticks away (a match takes ninety seconds). When someone scores, the goal and the scorer are shown under the team.

After your match is finished the other results from your division are shown, and then your wage bill and weekly news. The weekly news tells you if you made or lost money this week, if any players are injured, and even bills you if there was any crowd trouble.

Check match: This option allows you to size up your opponents; it tells you their league position, their formation, and the skill of their goalkeeper, defence, midfield, and attack, so you can adjust your squad in order to wallop them!

Fixtures: This shows you a table of your previous results and the matches you have left to play in your thirty-eight game season.

Extra training: This option allows you to give extra training to either the goalkeeper, defence, midfield, or the attackers. This is in order to improve their skills. You can train them for any length of time between one to nine hours, but don't give them too long as they may slack or even get injured.

Transfer Market: As you are given only half a million pounds to begin with you ought to be very careful at the transfer market as the striker you buy could have excellent potential. Then again he could be the next Alan Smith! Each player has a certain amount of skill between one and nine. You can expect to pay anything between £10,000 and £100,000 for a player and the inlay does give you a key to help yourself make successful bids.

Injuries/Goals: This gives you a run down of who is injured, how many goals have been scored and how many the keeper has conceded in your squad.

Bank: As in life itself you can obtain a company loan, but as in life itself it is a very small one with a very large rate of interest. You can also obtain a mortgage should you wish to build a new stand.

Gamble: This tempting option allows you to bet that your team will win the league title, F.A. or League (Littlewoods) Cup, or for the less extravagant of you just to simply gain promotion. You can bet anything up to £100,000.

Employees: At this option you can hire a coach, physio, and a team scout all of which are fairly necessary. You can also hire a youth team manager which at £2000 a week may seem rather expensive, but every so often a promising young lad qualifies to the ranks of the big boys.

Shares: Every football director is a bit of a capitalist — some more than others (Yes, you Mr Bulstrode!). Watch your share prices rise and fall and decide when to sell or buy but take my advice don't sell to Marler Estates!

Insure: Like this. Should any of your players get injured and you have taken out a policy you rein the readies for a while.

Build Stand: Why not do just that? Naturally it costs.

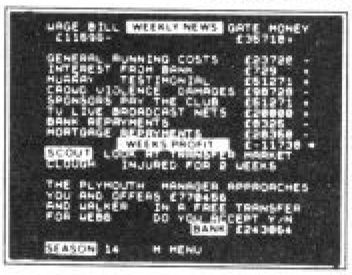
Postponements: Simply tells you if there are any.

Level: This is a nasty one. There are three levels easy, normal, and hard. With normal you can choose which level you wish to start on, but the nasty evil wicked twisted programming team have been extremely cunning and taught the computer to put you up a level if you are playing too well, and won't allow you to turn it down. I don't wish to sound like a wimp with sour grapes but this is indeed a bitch! If you are bottom of the league and getting thoroughly beaten then you are permitted to continue getting slaughtered on easy level. But then should you start playing half decently it's on to the next level you go which means you'll fly down to the bottom of the league. I've had words with the programmer and I am informed that you must have the perfect blend of players for each division, not too good to be moved up a level and not useless so they don't lose even on level one; all I know is I haven't found the correct formula!

Football Director is an extremely competent simulation/football strategy game. It has the correct blend of speed, realism, and playability not to be found on any other game of this type since Football Manager (which I confess I am thoroughly sick of) and for this reason it is better than the old Addictive classic.

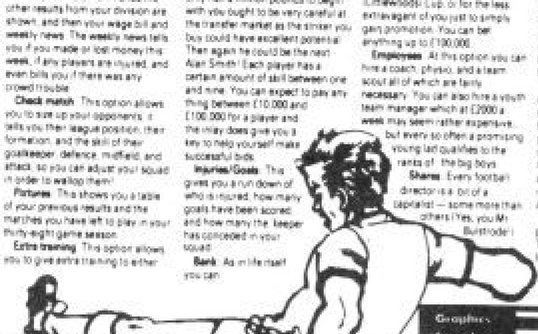
It is a rather tricky game but sheer patience will soon overcome this. The 64 needs good football games like Bristol City need good players (Oi! — Ed) and this is one.

Ferdy Hamilton





Can a team like this survive at the top



Graphics	
Sound	
Toughness	
Endurance	
Value	
8 Overall	

"COMMODORE USERS"
Review October Issue

FOOTBALL DIRECTOR

D&H/£8.95

Marcus Although most of the games industry has been cornered by the big companies with their vast marketing spends, advertising budgets and freebie lunches for Dr Berkmann (more, please!), there's one tiny sector that's still well under control of the independents — the footie management simulation. It's probably got much to do with the massive success of Kevin Toms' Football Manager, which has bobbed in and out of the charts for nigh on five years and is probably the best selling Speccy game ever. (Is it? I'd be interested to find out.)

The best of the current crop is D&H Games' Football Director, which is about to be made widely available after some time on mail order only. Written by De Salis and Huggard it's a no-frills sim which cuts out any unnecessary graphics and attempts at arcade action and sticks to what footie sim fans really want — pure strategy. The packaging's modest — a simple inlay card with the barest of instruction — but if you're interested in a game like this, you're going to know exactly what's required, and what you don't get immediately you'll pick up along the way.

Starting at the bottom of Div 4 (where else?) you must pick your team and battle through a full league programme without throwing all your money away. You can mortgage your club when the going gets tough (which it will) and also borrow dosh from the bank. There's a full timetable of League, FA Cup, League Cup and European matches. Players have skill points, which are influenced by morale, which is naturally decided by winning or not. Morale is surprisingly fragile. There are appalling hazards all along the way — injuries, sendings off, postponements, crowd violence, retirements, interest, tax, other managers trying to poach your players, even sackings. There are fixture lists, automatic updatings of the league, midweek games, the opportunity to buy or sell shares, international games, loads of transfers and even three skill levels. It makes Football Manager look like a tatty old Basic game. If you like this sort of thing (which I do), you'll love this.

If you have problems finding it in the shops, send £8.95 (cheque/PO) to D&H Games, 19 Melne Road, Stevenage, Herts SG2 8LL. Oh, and remember to save regularly — it has the occasional tendency to crash!



YS CLAPOMETER

A definite Match Of The Day for football fans. Low on action, but high on strategy. You'll be over the moon with this one!

TOTAL 8

"YOUR SINCLAIR"
Review November Issue

"Don't take our word for it, take the word of the reviewers who like strategy games".

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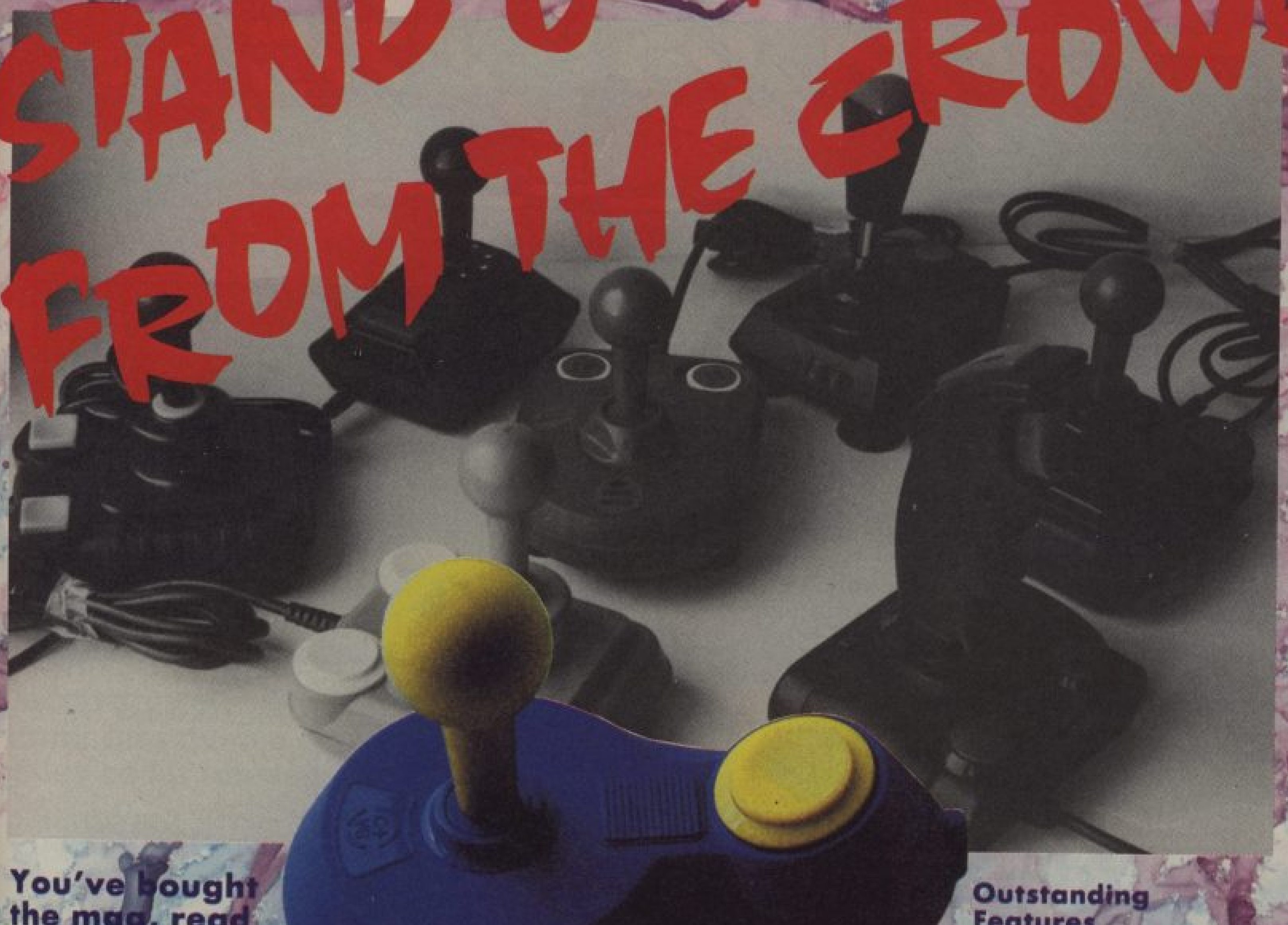
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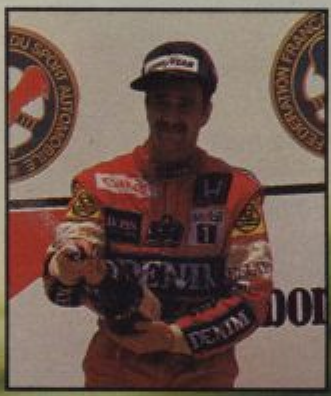
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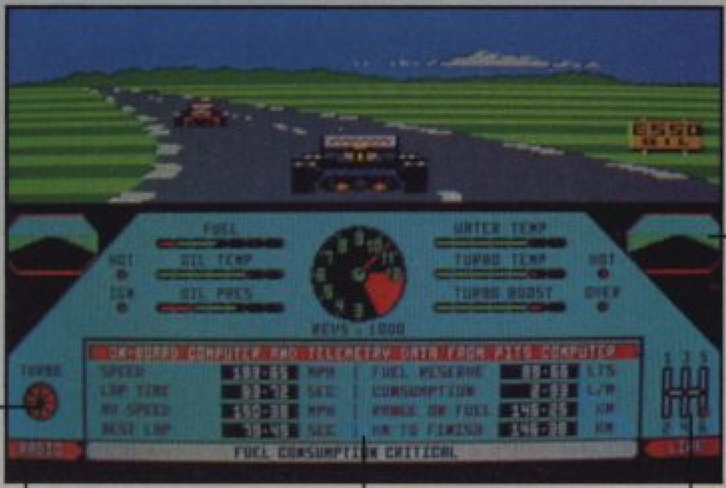
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The engine roars – *your grip tightens on the steering wheel.*
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Nigel Mansell celebrating victory.

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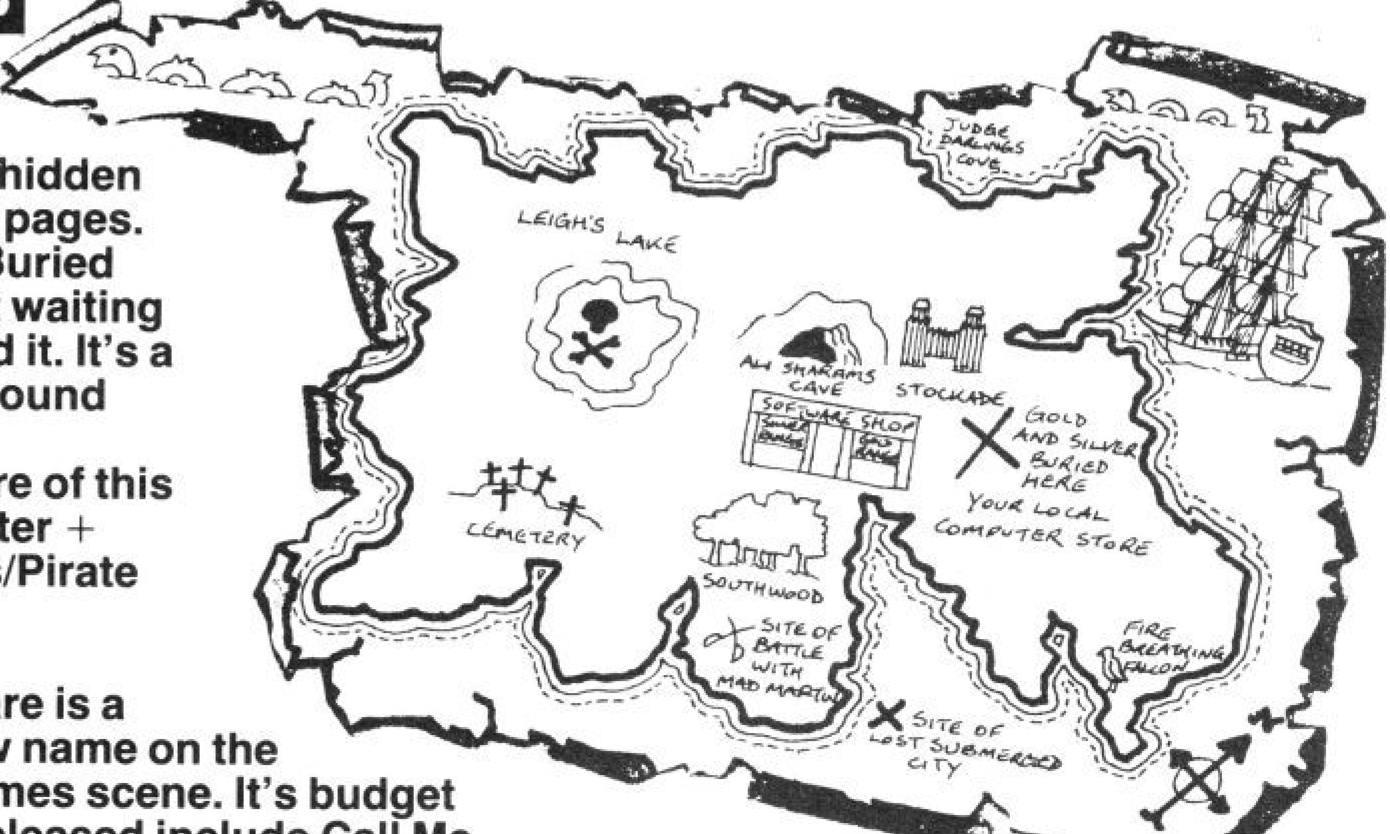
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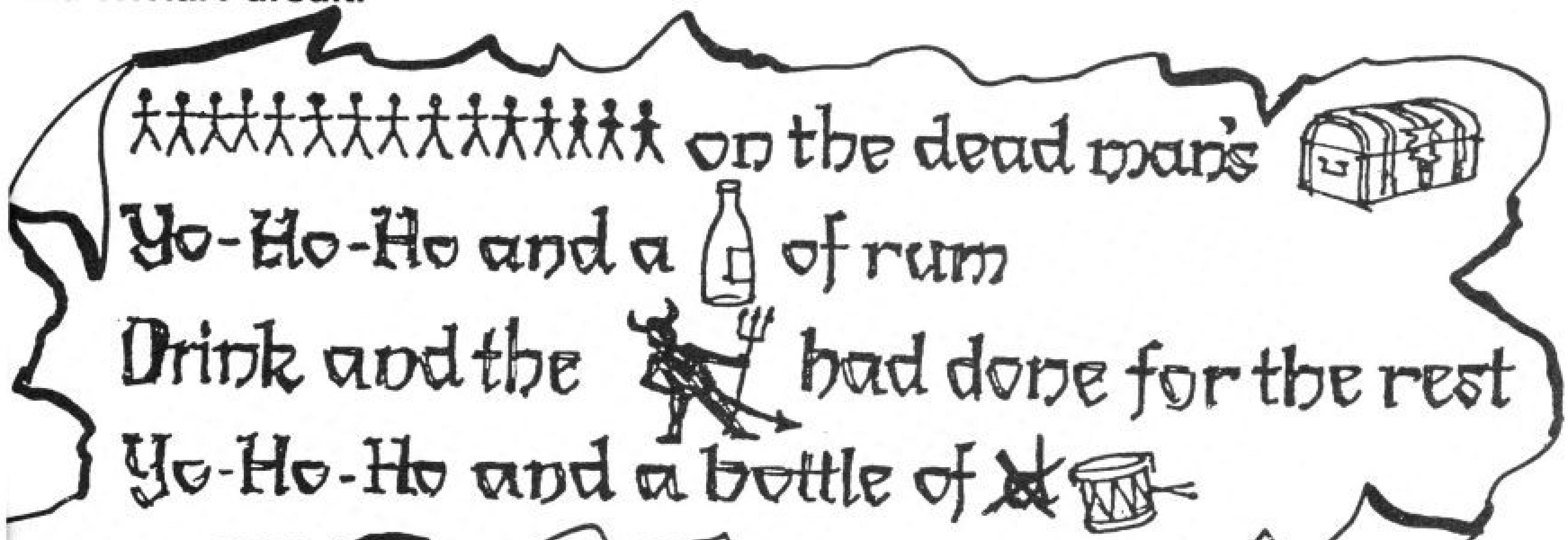
PIRATE GOLD



Avast there, me hearties! There's gold hidden in these here pages. Pirate gold. Buried treasure, just waiting for you to find it. It's a haul worth around £1,000.

That is the lure of this great Computer + Video Games/Pirate Software competition.

Pirate Software is a relatively new name on the computer games scene. It's budget titles so far released include Call Me Psycho, Smashout, Holiday in Summaria and Trivial Pursuit.



First prize is a gold medallion embossed with a skull and crossbones.

The second and third prizes are silver and bronze medallions.

The next 25 runners-up will get a Pirate game – so don't forget to say which computer you own.

All you have to do is work out the missing words from this verse taken from Treasure Island.

Send your answers to Pirate Gold, Computer + Video Games, Priory Court, 30-32 Farringdon Lane, London EC1R 3AU. The closing date is February 16th and Long John Silver's decision is final.

Name ....

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My computer is ....

The Prisoner Competition



CHANNEL 5

I am not a number. I am a free man. Immortal words from probably the most innovative television series of the sixties – *The Prisoner.*

Channel 5 has recently been releasing the series on video. There are 17 of the programmes in the series – starring Patrick McGoohan – and the final episode has just been released on video.

So how would you like to win the entire series of this epic which detailed the story of a secret agent who quit his job and was mysteriously spirited off to the Village, a picturesque prison camp set on the coast? There were no names, just numbers for the "inmates".

The series was weird, wonderful and years ahead of its time. It's so good that some members of the C+VG team would almost kill to get their hands on these videos.

But this set of videos is just for you. All you have to do is answer two questions. If you are very young you may have to get your Dad or older brother to help you.

1 What was the Number given to the Prisoner?

____

2 Patrick McGoohan starred in a very popular television series before the Prisoner. Was it:

A Danger Man. ☐
B The Saint. ☐
C Department S. ☐

Name ....

Address ....

....

....

Send your answers together with the printed coupon to The Prisoner Competition, Computer + Video Games, Priory Court, 30-32 Farringdon Lane, London EC1R 3AU. The closing date is February 16th and the editor's decision – or that of No 2 (an in-joke for Prisoner fans) – is final.

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If you buy your ST from Silica Shop, you will also receive:

** NEOchrome Sampler - colour graphics program * 1st Word - Word Processor*

In addition, we at Silica would like to see you get off to a flying start with your new computer, so we have put together a special **ST STARTER KIT** worth over £100, which we are giving away **FREE OF CHARGE** with every ST computer purchased at our normal retail prices. This kit is available **ONLY FROM SILICA** and is aimed at providing users with a valuable introduction to the world of computing. We are continually upgrading the ST Starter Kit, which contains public domain and other licensed software, as well as books, magazines and accessories all relevant to ST computing. Return the coupon below for full details.

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ATARI ST

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LETTERS
ANNIE HALFACREE
"But beware! To summon forth you screaming apparition from the voids will envoke certain death upon the ill-prepared. Instructions and majiks must be followed to the letter. Study thy pictorial diagrams with care. Memorize thoroughly. When these and appropriate incantations can be performed without deviation of inflection the student may proceed...'
FINCHLEY. 10:30 P.M.
"...To Chapter XI"
RIVETING STUFF, ISN'T IT, GEOFFREY? SO AUTHENTIC, YAH? WHERE DID YOU FIND THE BOOK? IT LOOKS VERY OLD. HOW MUCH WAS...
SSHHH! DON'T INTERRUPT, FIONA. NOW IT GETS REALLY INTERESTING. LISTEN TO THIS BIT...



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"Study fig (ii) with care. Then render an accurate reproduction upon the floor of your dwelling. Fig (ii) must be drawn in fresh lambs blood. Now proceed to Chapter XII..."
OH HOW GROSS! WHERE DID YOU GET THAT THING?
SECOND HAND BOOK SHOP. DEAD CHEAP, TOO.
JUST TO SEE THEIR FACES WHEN THEY READ THIS. HEH. THEY'LL ARGUE AND PONTIFICATE LOUDLY ABOUT INCLINE AND ANGLES OF INCIDENCE. BUT STILL IT WILL MAKE NO SENSE. TONIGHT I FEEL EXTRAVAGANT.
TONIGHT I BURGLE THE PENTHOUSE FLATS.
FSSSST!
EACH CRACK IS A CHASM. EACH POCK MARK A CAVE. THIS VERTICAL CONCRETE IS MY ELEMENT. I CANNOT FALL.
GOING UP
SCHRANK
PANTHER STRIKES AGAI
HMMM. APPARENTLY FIG (II) IS YOUR...UM... PROTECTION FROM ANYTHING SUMMONED FROM THE DARKNESS. CHAPTER THIRTEEN CONTAINS THE CORRECT INCANTATION TO SUMMON THE APPARITIONS. THERE'S A WARNING HERE... LISTEN.
"On no account must the student recite the final chapter until having mastered Chapters I to XII..."
GO ON. READ IT, GEOFFREY...
"...I DARE YOU..."
WHAT DO YOU WANT, LITTLE SSWINE?
HEE HEE HEE
YOU DARE LAUGH?


SHOW SOME RESPECT, FLEDGLINGS! LOOK UPON A MIGHTY BEING AND QUIVER! FOR TEN THOUSAND YEARS I'VE LIVED, IN A TERRIFYING PLACE FAR BEYOND THE REACH OF YOUR MUDDIEST DREAMS WHERE THE DARKNESS IS SO SLOE BLACK AND THICK LIKE TREACLE! AND IT STINKS! WHICH SUITS ME FINE... NOW P...
YOU TALK TOO MUCH, UGLY FACE.
SILENCE!! I'M A MEMBER OF THE BLACK COUNCIL! I'LL HAVE YOU FLOGGED, LITTLE RRATSSPIT SSCUM!
WE'VE COME TO PUT YOUR LIGHTS OUT.
HAH HAH HAH HAHG! YOU? KILL ME?
OH, PUH-LEEZE! HOW WILL YOU FIGHT ME, FLEDGLINGS? WHERE ARE YOUR DEFENCES? PERHAPS YOU WILL SPANK ME TO DEATH WITH YONDER CRUDE LOOKING BLUNT INSTRUMENT...
NOT EXACTLEE...
AK!
AHA!
YOWWWWL!!
GRAB 'IM!
DONK!
DONK!
GAH! BE QUICK! BE QUICK!
BE SILENT, COUNCILLOR! BE SILENT!
MMFF!
FUD! FUD! FUD!



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DEAD AT LAST, COUNCILLOR, AND NONE TOO SOON, YOU LUDDITE! AND NOW WE TAKE THE JEWEL AND FLY!
WHAT'S HAPPENING?
Grivarii, Solomanus, Ikk-Hut...
Yastilinn...
stib.
AAHHAARRR
HELP!
YEEEK!
FOOM
OHO. A DISTURBANCE IN THE PENTHOUSE.
!
GRINNING FIENDS? MYSTERIOUS EXPLOSIONS?
I MUST INVESTIGATE. I MUST GO DOWN.



GA-ROBUCH!
KA30
SMART!
GASP!!
GTI
CHINK!
OMYGOD! THEY GOT THE GOLF!
LITTE
LIT
FUD!
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ADVENTURE

And it came to pass that the Fiend descended from the Folly to move among us ordinary mortals and go in search of adventure. Or rather adventure games. Was he pleased with the state of play? Read on to find out in the latest missive from Folly.

The Fiend....

The doings of feeble mortals are usually beneath the notice and contempt of The Fiend, my megabrain being involved in thinking thoughts way beyond their comprehension or wit.

Only occasionally do the squawkings of you adventurers reach sufficient volume to disturb my meditations in the deep caves beneath the Folly. THIS is one such occasion.

It seems there is incredible controversy raging over the relative merits of Infocom games versus Magnetic Scrolls. So The Fiend has roused himself to investigate, and to settle the argument once and for all. For when The Fiend has spoken, so it is, and all discussion ceases.

So I loaded up the ST (yes, of course I have got one!) and polished off *Stationfall* and *The Pawn*. And then a hush fell over the countryside, to await my verdict. The tension was tangible. Which way would The Fiend lean, and who would bear the brunt of his terrible wrath? Which is the better game?

Answering that question is akin to deciding whether an apple is better than a banana. It depends upon your individual taste, and what you feel like at the time, for both are equally worthy fruits – I personally prefer bananas.

Stationfall proves once and for all The Fiend's previous statements that graphics are not needed to make a good adventure. Playing this game was like living a book, or perhaps living in a radio play. And even the unfeeling Fiend, who has spread fear and misery among so many, was near to tears at the end, as I was forced to terminate that friendship.

The Pawn shows just what can be done with graphics, which are stunning. But strip these away, and is the game a



good adventure or just a vehicle for pretty pictures?

Well, it just about works, but with a little extra thought it could have been magnificent. I was about to take my hat off to it when I finally discovered the flying platform – now I could rescue the princess through the window, and complete ALL the tasks. Could I heck as like?! Hat was firmly plonked back on craggy dome.

I should have been suspicious when reading the box, for any game that claims to be complex and subtle should be looked at askance, for these are merely synonyms for complicated and obtuse! I cite the boulder and dragon problems to illustrate my case.

Well, that's settled that, once and for all. And so to the parsers. Which is better? Neither! For both are more than adequate for the job they have to do, and the fact that with one you can put an object in a pouch on a stump is totally irrelevant, a waste of time, and useless.

Would you buy a formula one racing car to go to the shops? Do you actually use multiple inputs?

Or, like me, is the bulk of your typing still verb/noun? The parser question should be of interest only to those who are turned on by the workings of machine code routines. For games players, this is a fruitless exercise.

I would point a large, hairy and accusing finger at BOTH parsers for being needlessly pedantic. If I have to type in 'examine' in full once more, I shall scream!

Don't you parser people realise that the word is used more than any other in any adventure?

Are you all completely stupid or something?

Surely it is not beyond your wit to use 'x' to speed up play considerably?

It may prove of some interest, and come as no surprise, that The Fiend actually succeeded in removing the chastity belt from the princess. What else would you expect of your favourite groper and public nuisance? How I did it I will not tell. But you would not expect me to, would you?

I will sign off, feeble mortals, with a big hello in the general direction of that verbalist David Picking of Upminster. If he would care to set foot on Folly Hill on the night of the next full moon, the Fiend will show him several tricks of taxidermy that will make his eyes water!

ADVENTURE helpline

A question often asked, is "How can I get hold of the hint book for **Scott Adams** games?"

They may be old, but they're still doing fine, and being appreciated.

The hint books cover all 17 games, and are available from Adventure Soft UK, PO Box 786, Sutton Coldfield, West Midlands, for £2.99. With the book comes a voucher worth £2 of further purchases of the games from Adventure Soft.

Overseas readers, particularly outside Europe, should note the hint books are no longer available from Adventure International in the USA, as stated on the packaging, as **R. Cribbes** of Como West in New South Wales discovered.

The only way to get the book now, it appears, is by ordering from Adventure Soft in the UK. If doing so, please include sufficient additional remittance to cover the cost of return postage.

Now on to more adventurous problems! We'll kick off with **Paul Hardy** of Sheffield, who is stuck in **Redhawk**. "How is the criminal Techno to be captured?" he asks. "What use are the gloves, magnet, and tube?" And Paul, always out of money, wonders how he could get more...

Are role-playing games really adventures? Some adventurers hate 'em, others love 'em. So if you're a role-player, can you help **Mike Rowe**, who is stuck in **Shard of Spring**. He has reached Ralith, and knows the gate spell, but how should he input it?

Allan Phillips hails from Camden, and as well as sending a goodly portion of help for other adventurers, included a generous list of his own problems!

Solved **Stolen Lamp,** a game from Lothlorien? Perhaps you'd be good enough to help **Allan,** through the Helpline, how to get rid of the thief.

Mindbender next, and Allan is having trouble with explosives – he can't get far enough away form them.

Play it Again Sam, has a constantly engaged telephone, while Inspector Flukeit is failing to reveal what is written on the tapestry, as well as the whereabouts of the secret door that appears after pulling the lever.

The Fiend has been imposing his views on the Adventure world for some months now, and has certainly got most of you talking!

"You should offer a reward for anyone recognising The Fiend's knobby knees – they really are quite distinctive!" suggests **Geoff Hale**, of Peacehaven. Or perhaps he just leaves you cold, like he does **Lee Hodgson**, of The Essential Myth... "Why do you waste a page on the incredibly tedious The Fiend". Surely the space would be better used giving small adventure writers a help by publishing reviews of their products," says Lee, a small adventure writer. Well, do you love The Fiend, or do you hate him?

MULTI-USER GAMES-CATCH

Here are some Multi User Games that unlike **MUD** or **Shades**, are free to play, apart from the phone call. Thanks to **Christopher Wood** of Hackney, for details. All are available at 1200/75 and 300/300 baud.

- **Mirrorworld:** Phone 0883 844044 or 844164. Wait for about one minute after dialing for connection.
- **Wanderland:** Phone 01-681 8081 (weekends and after 6pm). 01-680 5330 (24 hours). Press RETURN/ENTER a few times after connection.
- **The Zone:** Phone 01-683 4507. Adult MUG, being re-written at time of writing.
- **Mountain:** Phone 0276-35546 or 321173 after 8pm. Soon to be charged for playing.

news

Smart Egg Software, who produced **Mastertronics'** highly successful **Rigel's Revenge**, are currently working on two more adventures.

Egg Cup will be published by Mastertronic, while **Federation,** a substantially revamped form of the old 8th Day title **Quann Tulla**, will be published by **CRL**.

Mike Woodroffe's **Adventure Soft** plan to produce a series of adventures based on James Dean films, during 1988. They will be the first to be produced on AS's new adventure system, currently under development for 16-bit machines.

Meanwhile, early this year should see the arrival of superhero **Captain America**.

And a final word for those thwarted by **Temple Of Terror's** 'uncompletable' bug. It will be re-released on the new 16-bit system later in the year, and at that time, a replacement working copy of the game will be offered free in exchange.

Scott Adams, the great adventure pioneer, whose works are still entertaining and baffling adventurers, has no plans at present for a return to adventure writing. He is reportedly working for a Florida software house called **Starsoft**, programming arcade conversions.

C+VG hopes to bring you more detailed news about Scott in the near future.

ADVENTURE clues

Help this month came from: **Gavin May**, Ipswich; **Mike Rowe**, Bristol; **Jonathan Ormond**, Ludlow; **Jakob Sloth**, Ringkobing, Denmark; **Gregory Quinn**, Portadown; and **Allan Phillips**, Camden.

RIGEL'S REVENGE:
To open utility cupboard, visit the empty encampment and then go S and E while being pursued by jetcopter. Press the switch. You can't charge the stun gun until Part 2 – but always carry it with you in Part 1! Don't get caught – once netted you're finished.

MORDON'S QUEST:
If it's invisible – spray it!

VERY BIG CAVE:
Examine some bubbles to stop a thief. To leave the garden, hang around and skin a rabbit!

EXODUS ULTIMA 3:
The Mask of the Snake is on level 8 of the dungeon, on the lowest of the three islands, east of Sosaria. To reach the island, enter the moongate when the twin moons read 0.1

KINGDOM OF HAMIL:
Throw a dusty jackdaw in the pit. Carry a talisman in the enchanted maize. Translate the coded message (it changes from game to game) for the password.

RICK HANSON:
Tie the hook to the rope, and throw it up the cliff, for a good climb. Divert the mouse with food if he is following.

TEMPLE OF TERROR:
Kill the centipede with the crossbow. Get the crossbow by releasing the trap near the death dog. Rolling the cannonball into the tunnel should do the trick. Throw the scorpion at the torture chamber door.

DODGY GEEZERS:
You need tricks, soap, and a video, for help in part 2. You definitely need the pickaxe!

MATT LUCAS:
Eat chocolate to avoid starvation in the grave. Kick a machine to get it.

HEROES OF KARN:
The crowbar is south of the coffin with the vampire in.


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Successfully dispose of Elvin and your quest is half over! Now your Mission becomes truly Impossible as you strive to escape the towers, avoiding guards, robots, mines, trap doors and elevators without detection!
...From the lift you enter the first room...
...But where to next?...
...Who or what is lurking behind these cars?...
...Can you access the next tower?...
...Could the final P.I.N. number be here?...
...Running into more trouble?...
...Why is the robot guarding that table?...
...A message on the tape recorder?...
...Quick! Escape from Elvin!!...
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Spectrum 48/128K £8.99 cassette
Atari ST £19.99 disk COMING SOON!
IBM PC & Compatibles £24.99 disk COMING SOON!
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exclusive review

JINXT

Another epic from *Magnetic Scrolls* just about to hit the streets, and the C+VG team hasn't got to play it yet? Shock! Horror! We sent *Keith Campbell* round to Scrolls HQ to rectify the situation and demand a copy. . .

Magnetic Scrolls' office, near London Bridge station, was buzzing with activity as I walked in. The Amiga version of *Jinxter* had just been sent for mastering, and the race was now on to complete the other versions. All manner of micro lined both sides of the room, and each was manned by a frantic adventure-person.

Anita Sinclair led me over to an Amiga, and took me through a selection of the pictures.

"You probably won't reach some of these before you write the review," she predicted. As she paged through them I wondered: Why is it that each new Scrolls' picture is such a treat to view? After all, we see so many different pictures on TV every week, what is the extra attraction of a 'still' produced by a computer?

Of course, it is the creation of an artist, not a computer nor a TV camera we are talking about. It is the mental images in the story, so beautifully brought to life, that makes the pictures so exciting.

In contrast with *Guild Of Thieves*, where Geoff Quilley drew the original 16-bit format, *Jinxter* has had three artists working on it, each doing his own conversions. This adds a lot more interest, for although the same high standard has been achieved, there is a variety in style evident throughout the game.

But at Scrolls, *Jinxter* has all but passed through, and the next production is beginning to take over. It has a working title of *Assassin*, although this is definitely not what it will be called. One of the many busy people in the room was its author Rod (The Pawn) Steggles, who was currently testing out the text.

Assassin, for want of a better name, will be a departure from Scrolls' usual adventure formula. It is based in the world of high finance, and involves matrimonial intrigue and insider dealing. You are the fall guy, and as you come to learn more about what has been going on behind your back, someone arranges for you to be assassinated. . .

"You won't need to know anything technical about stocks and shares," claimed Rod, who had just got back from a research visit to the Commodity Exchange.

There will be many more characters to interact with in *'Assassin'*, but the adventure might not have quite the same appeal to the younger elements of Magnetic Scrolls' following. "We're hoping to attrack a more serious audience, and reach a more adult market," explained Anita, adding that there was no reason why younger people should not enjoy the game, which should be ready around March.

With the pace accelerating at Scrolls, space is getting tight, and so a move to larger offices upstairs is planned for January, Anita told me. At that moment, a cheer went up. Simultaneously a working Atari ST *Jinxter* had been prepared for me, a task which on my arrival had been forecast to take between 30 minutes and seven hours (it took 40 minutes), and just around the corner, C-64 *Jinxter* had unexpectedly started to run successfully.

Clutching the coveted disk, I decided this was a good time to make a getaway. "Not so fast!" exlaimed Anita, thrusting sheaves of photocopied material into my hands. "You won't get anywhere without these, there're clues and copy protection built in!"

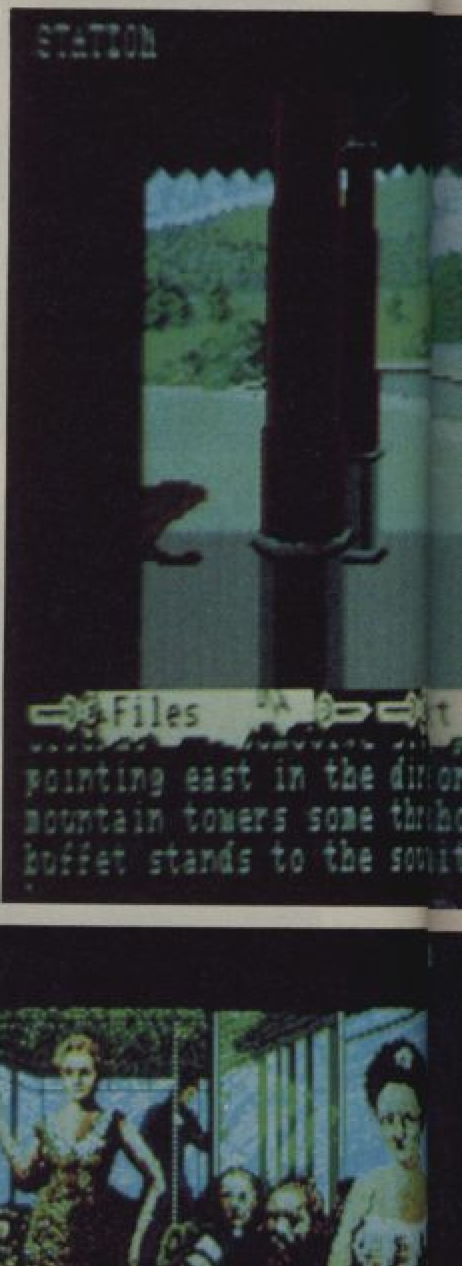
Stuffing the paperwork into my briefcase, I hurried out into the cold evening, eager to get

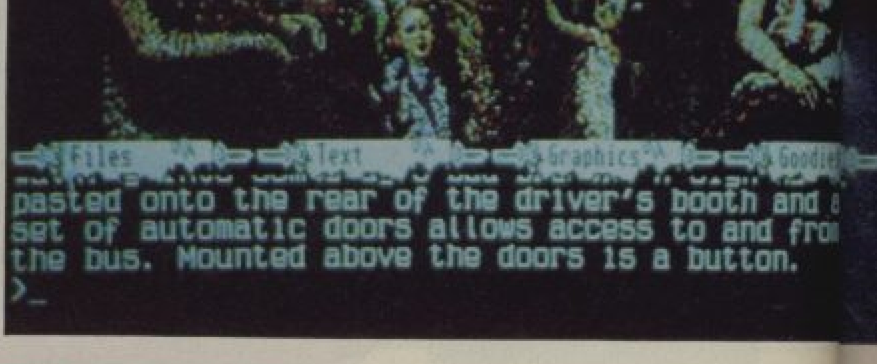
- **MACHINE: ATARI ST/AMIGA/ AMSTRAD PCW AND 6128: IBM PC/COMMODORE 64; APPLE**
- **SUPPLIER: RAINBIRD/MAGNETIC SCROLLS**
- **PRICE: ST/AMIGA (£24.95)**
- **REVIEWER: KEITH**

To speak to him, you would hardly take him for an immortal demi-god. It was only the way he swooped down out of the sky and landed on the pavement beside me that convinced me he was, in fact, the Guardian in the Department of Turani (Sacred Charm Subdivision) that he claimed to be.

The wossnames from the Green Witches charm doodah had been removed and dispersed, he told me. If they can be found, and the doodah re-assembled, before the Green Witches' do it, their power will be broken. But this was a job for a mortal, not a god, and I was he. Narmean?

Complaining bitterly about the processed cheese in the



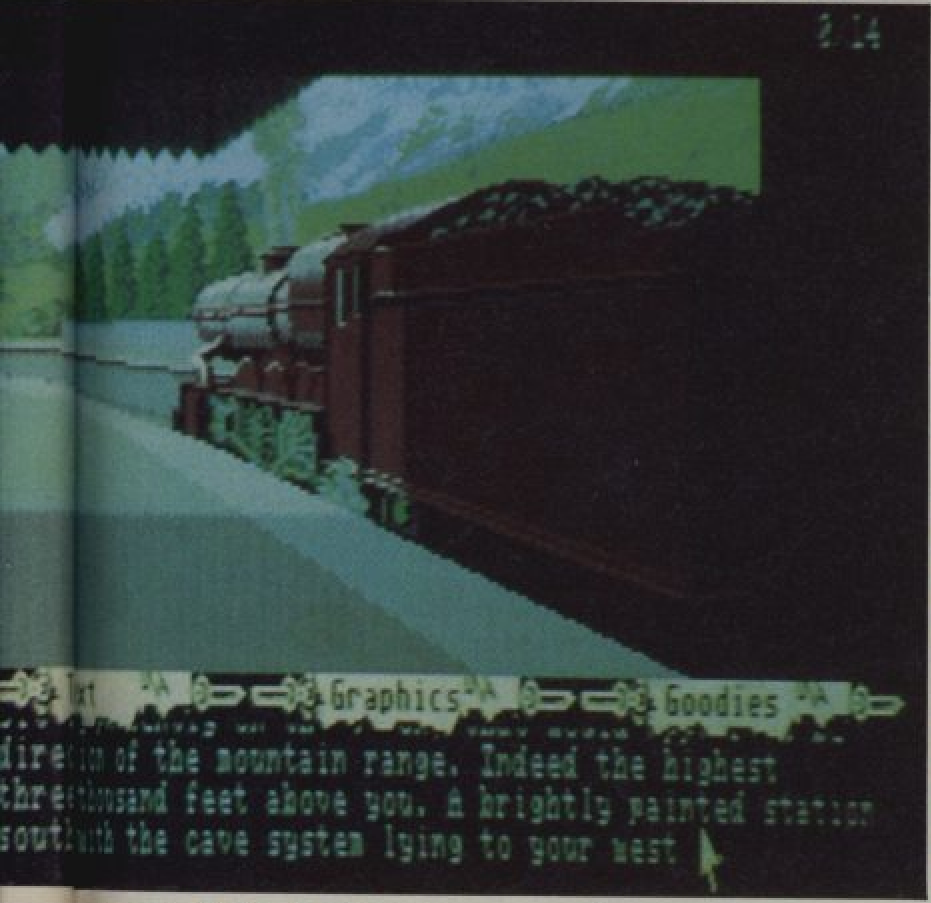


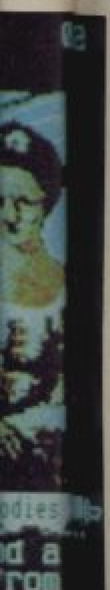
TER

happy summers that you and Xam spent the evening watching the flies disporting themselves with merry cries and fluttering wings. But this is winter, and every autumn, they go to Dead Fly Wood to snuff it. In fact, the ground there is knee deep in them!

Full of delightfully humorous text, *Jinxter* also has plenty of puzzles that, even when you think (correctly) that you know the solution, require four or five attempts – because they don't work exactly as you reckoned. So save your position frequently!







sandwich he had been munching the whole while, he handed me a document, made me read it ("Hurry up, I wanna get back to the wife and kids!") and – whoosh! – he was gone! Thus started my search for the seven charms.

Set in the country, the action proper starts in your bungalow, and soon moves across the fields (beware of the bull!) to your friend Xam's chocolate-box thatched cottage. Xam has mysteriously disappeared after phoning you with a panic warning. . . With Xam gone, it is with nostalgia that you walk across his garden, and notice the fly bath – a lot smaller than a bird-bath, but performing the same function. Many were the

Like Old Lebling the postman, who comes along puffing and panting, but you miss his delivery, and merely find a Post Office note telling you how to reclaim the parcel. Sounds easy 'cos you think you've sussed it out, eh? But when Lebling (I've heard of him before, somewhere, surely?) returns with it, no way is he going to hand it over to anyone other than the rightful resident of the property. . .

Xam has a mad gardener with two rather unusual hobbies – cheese making and fish shooting. So perhaps it comes as no surprise, when you decide to take a trip across the lagoon, that Xam's canoe has been holed by an over-enthusiastic shot. But get across you must, for there is lots to be done in the village across the water.

The village, with its pub, its Post Office, its bakery, and its clockmaker, is where careful reading of The Independent Guardian will pay dividends. This August publication, mainly concerned with herring-bone overcoats and cheese sandwiches, also contains type-in coded clues, and clues. But beware! The coded clues are just what clues should be – they don't actually tell you the answer!

The IG will also help you make use of the charms which by now you will have acquired (won't you?). For they are magic, and as such, can be used to cast spells. The mechanism for doing this is hilarious, but their usefulness is quite serious, and must be learned to be effective. They also have the means by which some extremely ingenious puzzles have been constructed. For example, it's not much use thingy-ing when it's sunny, nor doing a bit of watchercallit on something you don't want.

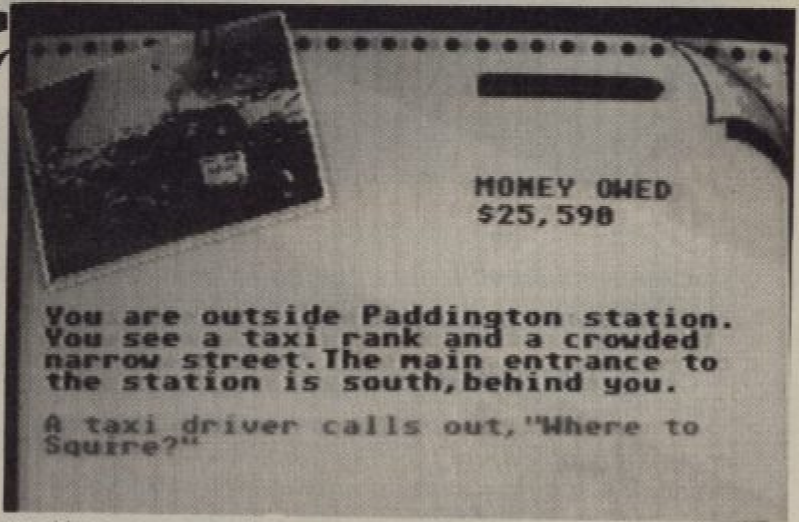
Most of the problems are challenging, of not over-difficult in hindsight, yet give great satisfaction and much mirth in solving. And many, too, have more than one solution. Sometimes the least preferred of these can lead to a reduction of points, meaning that you can complete the game with less than 100% scores.

I proclaimed *Guild Of Thieves* better than *The Pawn*. I now proclaim *Jinxter* more entertaining even than *Guild*. As the Guardian might say: "If you gotta doofah that'll play it, you'd be wossname if you didn't go out and buy watchercallit. Narmean?"

▶ **VOCABULARY**	**8**
▶ **ATMOSPHERE**	**10**
▶ **PERSONAL**	**10**
▶ **VALUE**	**9**



NOT A PENNY MORE, NOT A PENNY LESS



- **MACHINE: ATARI ST**
- **SUPPLIER: DOMARK**
- **PRICE: £14.95**
- **REVIEWER: KEITH CAMPBELL**

Based on Jeffrey Archer's first best-seller, this adventure game can best be described as a computerised novel. Game and book are closely linked, so it is advisable to read the book (included) to benefit fully from playing the game.

The player is guided through the plot, and presented with many difficult puzzles which require some lateral thinking to solve. Once an action is taken, there's no turning back!

You play Stephen Bradley, a professor at Magdalen College, Oxford, who has been swindled out of $250,000 by Harvey Metcalfe, life-long king of shady deals.

Starting off in your college room, you must compile a dossier of information on Harvey. A telephone allows you to contact your stockbrokers, who helpfully inform you that you are not the only victim of Harvey's swindling – there are three other suckers.

So your task is to band together to steal the money back – total of $1,000,000. Not a penny more, not a penny less.

First you must meet these people. There's Robin Oakley, doctor – Jean Pierre Lamanns, art dealer – and James Viscount Brigsley, unmarried actor with a mention in Who's Who.

The game differs from usual adventures in that you don't have to search through locations to find each character. Instead, you simply type EXAMINE followed by a name, and you are taken to him. For example, if you wish to meet Robin Oakley, you first book an appointment at his surgery, type in EXAMINE ROBIN, and you find yourself in his waiting room. There, as in other locations, it is necessary to think carefully about how to extract the maximum information, which involves talking to the right people at the right time.

This sets the scene. Next you mut persuade the victims to band together, and finally you must co-ordinate them as they help each other with the stings.

I played the Atari ST version, the first one available, and there will be differences between this and other versions. The BBC B/ Master will have text only, whilst the others will have text and graphics, with speech added in certain locations.

The vocabulary is a bit limited for the ST but due to the nature of the game, this becomes only a small niggling point as the puzzles start to take over and compensate for this.

This is a tricky game requiring careful thought and planning. If you read the book whilst playing the game, then you will find it a lot more enjoyable. Due to the nature of the plot, the game is aimed at the more experienced adventure/ strategy player, or those people with a lot of mental agility.

GRAPHICS	7
SOUND	8
VALUE	8
PLAYABILITY	8

DEJA VU

- **MACHINE: APPLE II, MACINTOSH, IBM PC, C64, ATARI ST, AMIGA**
- **SUPPLIER: MINDSCAPE**
- **PRICE: ?**
- **VERSION TESTED: C64**
- **REVIEWER: KEITH**

Feeling dead rough, and suffering a total loss of memory, you come to in the gents' cubicle at Joe's Bar. You have marks on your arm that may have been caused by injections...

Struggling out of the room, you find it is night-time. You are weak and trembling, and must urgently do something about your condition – but what? Joe's Bar is locked up, and there is no easy way out of the building. Exploring, you soon find evidence of drugs which may have been administered to you, and also a body. With a few clues you've picked up on the way, you are soon outside, and working on discovering your identity. Of course, you'll want to solve the murder too, (did YOU do it?) and violent muggers and sewer alligators, are among the hazards you'll have to content with!

Deja Vu is not a new adventure, it has been around for a year or so, originally for the Macintosh. Since then, it has spread its wings, and migrated to other machines, among them, the Commodore 64 – which is the version I played.

Deja Vu takes the optional-icon format of adventures such as *Borrowed Time* and *Tass Times* a lot further. You can forget typing text – the whole game, with very minor exceptions, is played entirely by joystick or mouse. This does mean that it has a very limited 'vocabulary'.

To select the required verb, the mouse-type arrow is moved to the appropriate icon, and the fire button is pressed. An object is selected in the same way, but instead of from a set of word icons, the display in the graphics window, the inventory window, or in a contents window, is used. A contents window shows whatever is inside something when it has been opened, and appears superimposed over part of the main graphics.

Since not all the exits are visible in the graphic (there may be a way out behind you) an Exits window is provided, showing the disposition of all the currently available exits in plan view.

Deja Vu is not exempt from illogical commands – a fault so often found in text adventures. I was playing away quite happily, when I happened to miss the (glass) window I intended to open, and clicked on the corpse lying next to it, by mistake. Imagine my surprise when the corpse actually opened, and something quite useful inside was revealed! I suspected that what I was really doing was opening his pocket – yet when I eventually finished this grisly task, I got the message THE CORPSE IS NOW CLOSED clearly enough!

Overall, this makes a quite novel adventure, although personally I would have felt happier typing in real text commands, and it would have been faster.

VOCABULARY	n/a
ATMOSPHERE	8
PERSONAL	7
VALUE	7

ADVENTURE

reviews round-up

VENOM

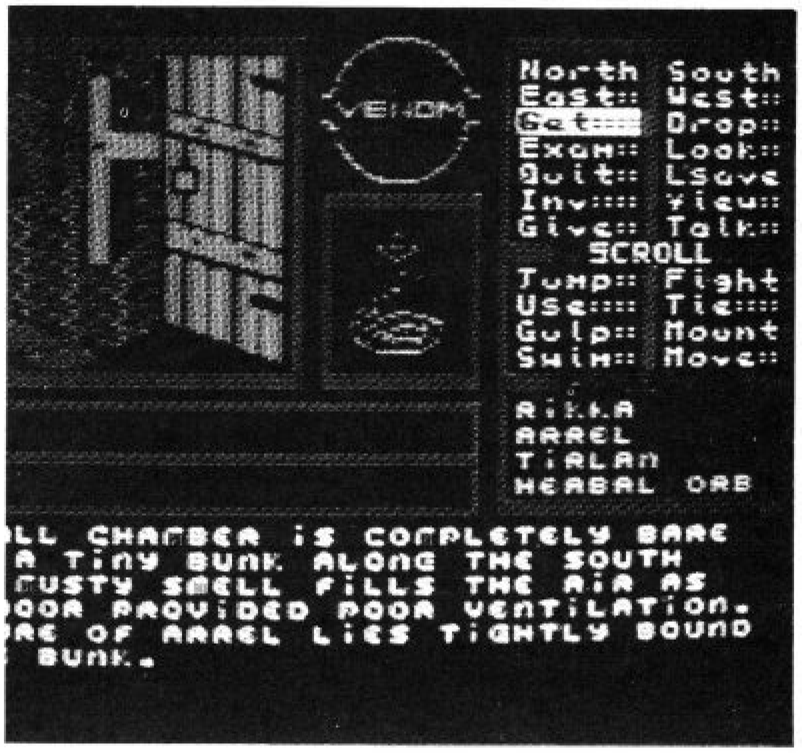
- MACHINES: COMMODORE 64, SPECTRUM
- SUPPLIER: MASTERTRONIC
- PRICE: £1.99
- REVIEWER: KEITH CAMPBELL
- QUICK GUIDE RATING: 5

Venom is an icon-driven adventure of some complexity. Listen carefully. Picture top left, verb list top right, constantly scrolling current reply middle left, characters present middle right, narrative text at bottom. Using joystick or cursor keys (I couldn't fathom the joystick action on the Spectrum + 2, perhaps because I had the wrong type) words are picked off the list (selected by pressing zero rather than enter on the Spectrum, would you believe?) and then control passes to the narrative text for the next word. Rather like *Koboyashi,* but slicker.

One of my main problems was having decided on my verb and selected it, the object I had in mind became unavailable as the narrative text changed before I could get hold of it.

Mundane plot. You, friend of the ruler of Armosin, lost land of the Argonath, have arranged to meet in the Dancing Drayman Inn, to plot to overthrow the Evil One, Traklan, and his Hordes. (I would have preferred to stay put, sink a few pints, and listen to the Pogues on the juke box).

The Dancing Drayman has decor and furniture like a



transport caff, other graphics are better. Pretty soon the icons begin to iritate. Give me proper text, not clingfilm-wrapped pre-packaged icon text gimmickry, anyday.

VIDEO WORLD

- MACHINE: AMSTRAD CPC
- SUPPLIER: GONSOFT
- PRICE: £2.50 CASSETTE: MAIL ORDER ONLY FROM: GONSOFT, 18 LAMBERT ROAD, SPROWSTON, NORWICH, NORFOLK NR7 8XP
- REVIEWER: KEITH CAMPBELL
- QUICK GUIDE RATING: 7

Here's a completely original format for an adventure, where you find out what you are carrying by the command PROPS, and move by EXIT. It makes a refreshing change from the usual scenario of overcoming-evil-arch-tyrant-of-Uungawalli-tribe-hellbent-on-using-magical-powers-for-destructive-purposes.

You start in a living room – with the curtains open. Daylight streams in and illuminates the room. In the fireplace, smoke from dying embers drift slowly up the chimney. An open doorway leads to the garden. Standby!! And cue the STAR!

That, of course, is you. You don't so much have to type in words that are in the game's vocabulary, as are in the film script!

"Sorry, Love, that's not in the script!" This is a Glen P. Megaschwartz Jnr Production.

In text only, colour is well used to make an attractive screen layout. As for the problems – now that's another matter! How do you enter a shed guarded by a vicious triffid? And how do you deal with the pirhana-filled pond? *Close up:* The STAR thrashes about in the water. *Special Effects:* The water turns red. *Fade out.* Press any channel to continue.

THE LABOUR OF HERCULES

- MACHINE: SPECTRUM 48K
- SUPPLIER: MAIL ORDER ONLY FROM: TERRY TAYLOR, 20 LEE ROAD, BACUP, LANCS OL13 0EA
- PRICE: £1.99
- VERSION TESTED: SPEC.
- REVIEWER: MATTHEW WOODLEY
- QUICK GUIDE RATING: 8

"What have I done?" cried Hercules, unable to believe that he had knowingly killed his own family. Theseus, his friend, tried to reassure him, saying that his hands may have been guilty, but the evil goddess Hera controlled his soul.

"I must pay for my sins," replied Hercules, "even if it means taking my own life."

"Be not hasty," advises Theseus, "Visit the oracle at Delphi – she will advise you."

And advise him – she does, with words of great wisdom. "You must purify yourself. Visit Eurystheus and submit yourself to whatever tasks he demands of you."

And so Hercules entered on an adventure with twelve tasks to solve in a land where graphics are not to be found, but instead the imagination paints vivid pictures. And he thought to himself: "This is a Quilled adventure." But that did not put him off, because he was enjoying the tasks at hand despite the rather limited vocabulary.

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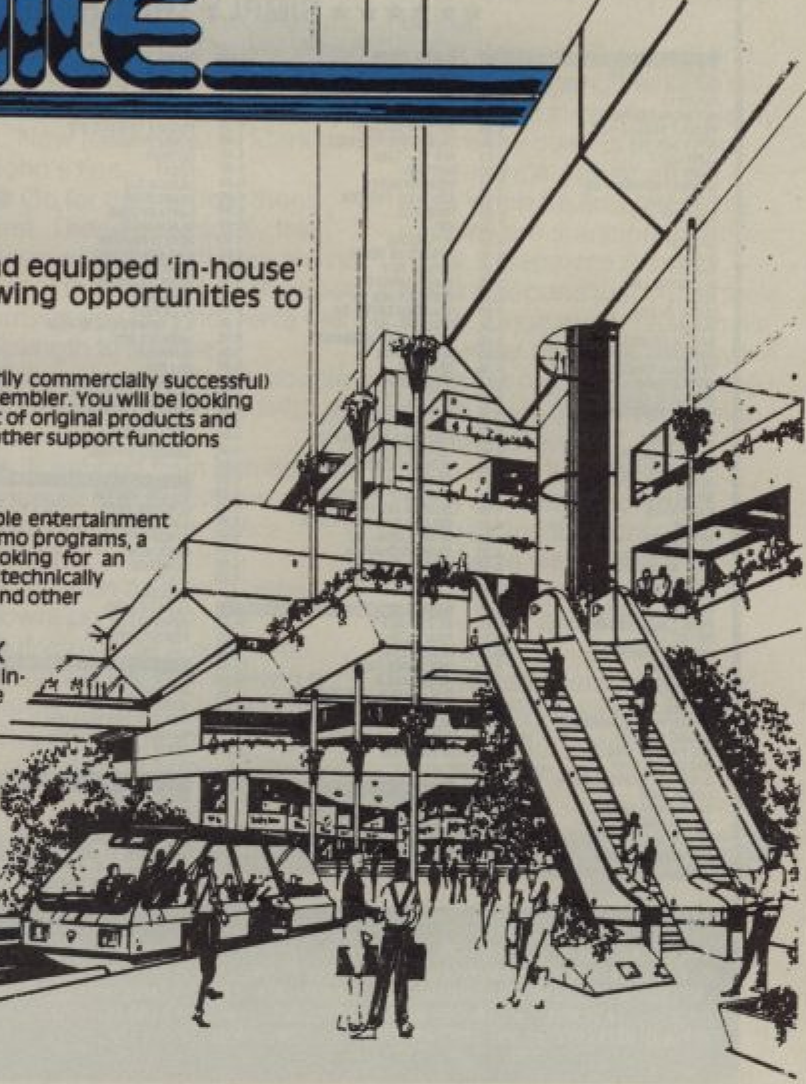
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IDEAS CENTRAL

ZIG-ZAG

Hints and tips for *Zig-Zag* come to you via the programmers David Bishop and Tony Crowther. Settle down and concentrate.

Mapping is essential. Use shields followed by the Riser, whenever you can afford it. They will offer 5 minutes of hassle free zapping. Use colour codes and zone numbers to help keep tabs on where you are. Self-contained areas have no aliens. Fly around there and get used to the shops movement and the joystick controls, before venturing out into the big bad world.

A co-pilot can be very useful. Learn the movements of each type of alien, each requires a different strategy for elimination.

There are various extras throughout the game, and here's a rough guide on how to select them. Once you have bought your extras in the shop, they are displayed in the selection menu in the centre of the status area. By pressing the space bar, or any other key on the right-hand third of the keyboard, you can scroll the items in the menu until the one you want is in the highlight box.

Then press fire to enact the power or use the weapon you have selected. Some extras can be used only once and then disappear, others last for a certain number of minutes, while X-ray vision and infra-red sight last until you lose a life.

Want to know what you can purchase in the shop? Here goes, Instant U-Turn – costs 5 and you can buy up to 99 at a time. This allows you to perform a U-turn anywhere. Zapper – costs 10 – maximum 99 – destroys anything in an area which extends off the screen in all directions. Mapper – 20 – maximum 99 – for when you get totally lost, you can use these to pull down a map display of your immediate area, showing all the routes you have so far travelled on, with your exact position indicated by the flashing section of maze in the middle of the map.

Fast missiles – 40 – only one at a time – these have half the range of normal missiles, but you can fire off twice as many at any oncoming alien.

Riser – 80 – one at a time – forces all aliens up to the ceiling, where they float around just itching to get down and kill you. When you use the riser, you can fly underneath all the aliens and use the prisms unmolested. Beware – the attracters will still be able to pull you up if you're not careful. Also, if you have to go up to their level, as you will when hitting wall targets, aliens can move around and still fire at you, even if it's only one plane.

Shields – 50 – one at a time – protects you from all dangers *except death* zones. Shield lasts five minutes and can be seen as a shimmering aura around your ship.

RENEGADE

Renegade hints – first from the programmers themselves and then some more from Simon Reeves of Berks. So, over to the experts.

Okay, our thanks to go *Renegade* programmers Mark Jones and John Brandwood for these street fighting hints for the game that's lived on a knife edge.

But first, a warning. The next Amstrad version tip is tacky. Not in the best possible taste. Try it at your peril. If you press all the control keys for *Renegade* all at once, then hit the Escape key. This should put the game on Pause. When play is resumed, the action is a little gory.

Now for the rest of Mark and John's tips.

- Go for the hardest thugs first. These are usually the ones with sticks. If they are not out of the way before the boss arrives you may not have the strength to survive.
- If you knee a thug a couple of times you could be in for a quick kill.
- If grabbed from behind, free yourself quickly otherwise your energy drains very quickly.
- As soon as a thug goes down, punch him.
- If you throw a punch the thugs will back off making it harder for you to get a good hit. Let them start coming forwards and begin to throw a punch before you attack.
- You can only destroy the boss when his energy is two or below.

On Renegade you will find the first two gangs easy to kill – just make sure you kill plenty before the bosses put in an appearance. Never attack a boss when he and one of his minions are standing together.

Try to separate them by walking around just out of their reach. Once the boss is on his own, wear down his energy by doing the high kick then close in and finish off with punching and kneeing.

On stage 3 try to kill as many as possible before Bertha joins the fight. Otherwise watch out! Whenever she is about try to keep as far away as poss, then wait.

When she comes towards you do a flying kick and once she's down – keep on punching her.

MSX

Here's one game that our MSX lover in the office raves about constantly so, with the help of his friend, Joseph McKoy of Mitcham, he's brought these tips for other MSX freaks.

Throughout the levels you will find several WARP screens. What you have to do is this: When on stages 1, 6, 9, 12, 13 and 15 look for the large sized holes which are scattered along the playing area. Go down one of these, pull down on the joystick and you will travel down a cave. You will pass several stages and arrive at another. The first warp is on stage 1, this leads to stage 6. Then from 6-9, 9-12 and from 13-15. There are a few more but we'll leave you to find them yourselves. You are also allowed to buy the gun twice and in doing so it becomes a cannon. This allows you to blast your way through rocks, logs, stone tablets, etc.

So far Joseph has not been able to do this, so if anyone else has please write and let us know.

HINTS AND TIPS

We've got some hints this month – but, only for the Sega. What's happened to all you Nintendo owners?

When you start Black Belt head for the right of the screen, killing all the wrestlers. The first foes you are faced with is a bloke throwing meat cleavers. Just go straight in and keep punching him. The next is a staff-twirling foe. The Chinese symbol gives invulnerability and the other varied chancers replenish your energy. The next enemy is a Chinese man armed with butterfly knives. He jumps high above you and tries to land on top of you, so be careful out there! The best way to defeat him is by kicking and punching him when he lands. Next up is the fat man. He is defeated by punches, but, watch out for his low kicks. After defeating him you go into a room to fight Ryu. Again go straight in and use your punch. It may take a few goes but after a while you will get the knack.

Now for chapter 2. First up is a man with a bull whip. He also jumps up high so try to kick him when he lands. The rest of the time use low flying kicks on his head. This may take a few tries as well. Next is a knive thrower. Before he appears on screen he throws a few knifes – try and dodge them. After defeating him you progress to Hawk. Hawk has mini throwing stars so watch out. Go straight in using kicks and after a couple of tries you will defeat him.

CoMiX

*B**ad boy makes good* . . . For a maverick writer/artist who refuses to toe the big-company line, Howard Chaykin sure has got a lot of product out at the moment:

★ *The Shadow* – a book I mentioned last month in C+VG, which collects Chaykin's four-issue rejuvenation of the classic pulp hero (Titan Books).

★ *Blackhawk* – another classic character rejuvenated. At least, I *think* it is; I haven't managed to get hold of a copy yet. Why do these things never come out on schedule? (DC Comics, approx. £2.10 per issue.)

★ *American Flagg* graphic novel "Southern Comfort" – three issues of the regular comic-book gathered into one large book. The story dates from early on in the *American Flagg* saga – 1984, to be precise – when Chaykin was still providing full story and art rather than just plots and covers as he does now.

This volume provides an excellent demonstration of all that's good – and all that's controversial – about Chaykin: sex, violence, humour, satire . . . It's all wrapped up in the tale of Reuben Flagg, a soft-porn actor turned lawman in an utterly corrupt (so what's new?) post-meltdown Chicago sometime in the 2030s. Chaykin and his team give us a breathtaking, if depressing glimpse of the future – all urban decay, semi-efficient technology and consumerism taken to absurdly logical lengths. It shares the mood of (though doesn't copy) *Blade Runner* and *Judge Dredd*.

I mentioned Chaykin's team: foremost among them at this time were his wife, colourist Leslie Zahler, and letterer Ken Bruzenak. Chaykin and Bruzenak must have worked extra-closely together here; they've come up with the most seamless combination of art and lettering I've ever seen in a comic-book and between them they create a fast-moving, sometimes confusing and always convincing vision.

At least, that's what I thought when I read the original comics. This new deluxe book format has certain disadvantages, however. First is the colouring: it doesn't appear to have been upgraded in the reprint, which admittedly wouldn't be a problem if the paper had stayed the same, too. But what looked exciting and innovative on standard bog-paper just looks garish in this glossy reprint. I expect better for the price – which is my second complaint. The book sells for





about £7.95: quite a lot for three issues of a comic which probably cost less than a pound each when they came out. On the other hand, the book is at least available, which the comics probably aren't, so to that extent it's well worth having a look at.

★ *Time^2* graphic novels: "The Epiphany" and "The Satisfaction of Black Mariah" – I'm going to have trouble adequately describing these. Are they set in the future? In some weird jazz-obsessed parallel universe? I'm not sure, but I'm in favour of it.

This is Chaykin's most controversial (ie, rudest – strictly for so-called "mature readers") work so far. The script is



simultaneously bitter and joyously humorous, and the artwork is Chaykin's stylish *tour de force*, beautifully enhanced by the rich colouring of Steve Oliff. (First Comics, about £5.50 each).

So, who is Chaykin and what's he been up to these past 15 years? He first appeared as a protégé of Neal Adams, to whom his style owed quite a bit. He took over from Adams in mid-issue as artist on Marvel's *War of the Worlds*, and from there went on to create and draw numerous short-lived heroes for just about every comic company around. After a few years he began to seem aimless and entirely lacking in a sense of what would sell.

But during this time he also took part in other people's projects – as a way of paying the rent, perhaps? These included some ambitious full-colour painted comic albums (the jargon has evolved: today we say "graphic novels"). Here the man's other artistic influences began to shine through – the "golden age" American magazine illustrators of the 20s and 30s, and comic artist Alex Toth.

My favourite from this period is Chaykin's adaptation of Alfred Bester's "The Stars my Destination" (part one – and if anybody's ever seen part two I'd be glad to hear about it), but the real clue to his career is his collaboration with Michael Moorcock, "The Swords of Heaven, the Flowers of Hell". Moorcock, of course, is known for – among other things – his "Eternal Champion" cycle. And with that in mind, it's easy to see what Chaykin was up to throughout the '70s – whether he was conscious of it or not. He was taking his own eternal champion with him from comic to comic, publisher to publisher.

Finally, we can see why there are such nagging similarities between DC's *Ironwolf*, Marvel's *Monark Starstalker* and *Dominic Fortune*, Atlas's *Scorpion* and Star★Reach's *Cody Starbuck* and *Gideon Faust*. To say nothing of Chaykin's work on *Solomon Kane* and *Star Wars*.

I reckon Chaykin must have realised what he was doing sometime in the early '80s – hence the self-consciously wise-cracking, deliberately provocative tone of his work since.

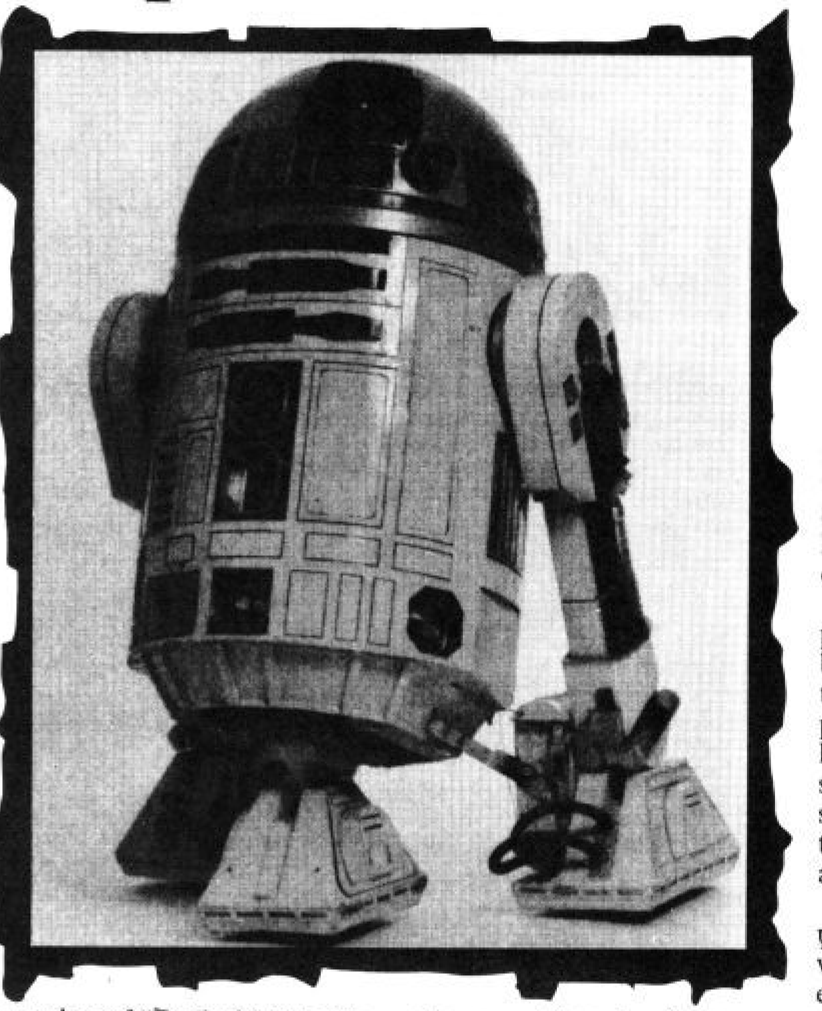
*C**oming soon from the makers of 2000AD* . . . Now that *2000AD* and the other ex-IPC comics are owned by Robert Maxwell, things should really start to get interesting. For instance, the *2000AD* team has announced plans for a new series of comic-books to appear simultaneously in Britain and the US. Some will star established *2000AD* characters; others will be specially created.

They seem to mean business – they intend to attract back top British artists such as Dave Gibbons and Brian Bolland, who now work exclusively for DC and others in the States. And to do so, they say, they're prepared to match – or better – the royalties and creators' rights available in the US.

PHILIP MORTON

FANTASY ROLE PLAYING

The response to our Fantasy Role Playing supplement in our December issue was so overwhelming we've decided to make it a regular C+VG feature. This issue fantasy expert, Wayne, casts his eye over the best in role playing games and models.



Star Wars

- **STAR WARS ROLE PLAYING GAME**
- **PUBLISHER: WEST END GAMES**
- **PRICE: £9.95**
- **RATING: 75%**

Would you believe that the "Star Wars" phenomenon is ten years old? (Yes. Ed). Since 1977 we have had the films, T-shirts, toys, videos, TV spin-offs, knickers, chocolate bars, and comics.

Now West End Games present the RPG.

The first thing that hits you is the packaging. There are 16 full colour pages, with memorable pictures taken from the original films plus many other black and white pictures, some of which have never been published before.

You are given a choice of 24 characters that are taken from the film. These vary from *Alien Student Of The Force* to *Wookiee* and you are given a special template for each character, which contains most of the details of your skills. I must admit I found some of the character classes very unappealing. I mean would you really want to play a character in the "Tongue tied engineer" Character class. No I thought not.

Special rules govern people who have "The Force", which includes the aquisitions of "Dark Side" points if you use the force in an immoral way. Basically, player characters are rebels against the Empire and if you gain a certain number of "Dark side" points you become a member of the Empire and the gamesmaster has to take your character template away from you, so you have to create a new character all over again.

Starships are easy to fly (if you have the appropriate skills and die rolls) and space combat is a piece of cake. However, the problem starts when characters want to try something their skills do not cover. The G.M. has to allocate a difficulty number from the "Difficulty number chart" and ask the player to roll a six sided die to see what the outcome is. For a start a new G.M. is going to have trouble judging the various categories of the players difficulty factor and then the decision they have to make is very black or white, with no area for limited success or failure.

Apart from this the "Star Wars" role playing system is enjoyable to play and a must for devotees of the films. It is also a good introduction to role playing in general.

Orc Wars

- **CHAOS MARAUDERS**
- **PRODUCED BY "GAMES WORKSHOP"**
- **PRICE £9.99**
- **RATING 78%**

So there you are, an 'orrible little Orc in a multi tribe Orc army. Eagerly awaiting a violent confrontation with those dumpy Dwarves, which to your mind has been far too long in coming.

Hold on, what's all that noise coming from our behind? Oh no, the Rotting Ear Tribe has fallen out with the Black Eye Tribe and the Bog Breath Tribe has fallen out with everyone! Great! Trouble at last, so damn the Dwarves, let's have a fight amongst ourselves!

Yes, this is what *Chaos Marauders* is all about, internal feuding between Orcish tribes, for no other reason than to fight and display tribal banners.

You play the organiser of a tribe, whose aim is to get three battle lines of troops together faster than any other tribe leader. This makes the other Orcs look stupid and incompetent, plus it shows off the strength of your tribe. Sounds simple doesn't it, but have you ever tried to get Orcs organised before!

This game is for two to four players and you try to set the battlelines on the playsheets that are provided. The playsheets are divided up horizontally into three lines of sixteen boxes, and are superimposed on a tremendous piece of atmospheric artwork.

The game is very simple to play. You take turn drawing various cards until your turn ends, which can be for any number of different reasons, from possessing too many of the same cards, to attacking another player. The cards are divided up into five colour coded types – all of which have different advantages (and in some cases disadvantages!). The cards have excellent artwork and are very attractive, not to say humorous.

Overall, this game is fast, entertaining and very easy to play. The only criticism I have is that the playsheets are quite flimsy and get fairly tatty after a couple of uses. Also I would have liked the cards to have been made bigger, so that the uses of certain cards could be entered on the bottom, to stop continual reference to the rulebooks. However, there is a wealth of detail in this game and it has obviously been well thought out. So well thought out in fact, that I would predict we will shortly be seeing a series of *Chaos Marauders* expansions kits on the market!


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Fantasy Role Playing







Letters

You said you wanted a Letters Page. And Hey Presto here it is! This will be the place to air your views, opinions, criticisms and general chat. All letters are welcome and from the next supplement onwards I will be giving away a copy of one of the products reviewed for each letter published. So now you have no excuse not to write in. Furthermore this column will only be included in C+VG for as long as there is support for it, so if you want to see more of it then WRITE IN NOW!

David Evans of Pedmore, West Midlands writes: "I think that the idea of having a Fantasy Supplement is very good indeed. A problem page would be ideal as I have trouble getting certain miniature figures, despite writing off to various major figure producing companies. It could give hints on cleaning, trimming and painting figures as well as making Dioramas. Finally, could you please give me the address of "Prince August" gaming as I would like to make my own miniatures."

Thanks for the support Dave. A problem page is another section that most of the readers thought the column could contain and I totally agree. So it is now in your hands! Drop me a line with any FRP problem that you may have and I will do my very best to sort it out. The address for Prince August Gaming was missed out due to a mix up at the printers, so to set the record straight the address you require is: Prince August (UK) Ltd, Dept A.A., Small Dole, Henfield, Sussex BN5 9XH.

Alex Koon has dropped a line to say: "I think the special was brilliant to say the least! I would like to see a regular Fantasy supplement in C+VG and if you can't arrange it, threaten the editor with a nice long sharp sword. The only criticism I have is that you tried to cram too much in so little space, so the reviews seemed short. All in all a great first effort!"

Well, Alex, I am doing my best to get the supplement established in the magazine but the only real way to achieve this is by the readers' support in the shape of mountains of letters sent to C+VG. The short reviews are mainly my fault. I write so much the poor sub-editor has to cut out great chunks of stuff to fit it all into the mag. I am trying to write more condensed reviews and hopefully they should be OK. As far as threatening the editor goes, I regret that I can't or I'll get the push. However, if you have nothing to do one weekday, I can arrange for the sword . . . enough said.

James "The King" Chan from Rodley, Leeds has a lot to get off his chest: "I looked at the Dec edition of C+VG and found a Role Playing section. Great! Let's read it! AAAAGGGGHHHH, I didn't like it at all (well I did a little bit). So what was wrong? Here is a run down:

1) There was no review of an actual Role Playing game.

2) The rating system is useless. I believe that you should use a system of say several categories, which should be marked out of twenty.

3) The description should go into more depth.

4) Put a bit of humour in the reviews.

Strong stuff, James, though you will be shocked to discover that I agree with your every word. Watch this space!

Fighting Miniatures

Figure fans are in for a treat this month with the release of a new oriental range called "The Land Of Nippon".

The figures are ninjas and they come in three poses; one is charging wielding a katana (long curved oriental sword); the other is about to release a shuriken (a five pointed throwing star) and one is kneeling, firing a short bow. The looks on their half masked faces and the way they are wielding their weapons make them look action packed.

Close up the figures are full of mystery and stealth, which really sums up the nature of the ninja, because they were hired by rich Japanese lords as spys or assassins. They all have other accessories moulded to their bodies from swords to waterbottles. At £1.50 for the lot in one blister pack they would complement any FRP perfectly. Available from Dixon Miniatures.

Also new from Dixon this month is a series of Dwarven fighters. These are not your common or garden dwarves, these are very special. They all come with detachable weapons, so that you can choose what weapons the dwarf fights with and in some cases you can actually alter the pose. Usually dwarves are modelled soley with large double bladed axes. This series breaks the mould, as the weapons that accompany their dwarven selection range from warpick, short sword, polearm and staff. If you really want to go over the top there are also a couple of Dwarven Samurai that wield such wicked oriental weapons as the yari and Natinata! All the spare weapons are cast with integral hands to fit onto the main body.

These are the best dwarves I have ever seen and at just 45p per figure (plus 10% p&p) they are an essential buy! You can obtain a sheet showing the complete list of dwarven variants by sending a large sae to Dixon Miniatures.

I have just received an absolute monster of a model from Grenadier Models. It is a War Rhino Captive Carrier from their Masterpiece Editions. Let me describe it. Imagine a rhino three times as big as normal, dead and consisting of only its skeleton. Somehow it has been raised from the dead and made to walk the earth again. It has a crew that consists of three skeletons; a driver, a guard and an archer that controls the huge crossbow. Did I forget to mention that? For the record there is a person-sized crossbow which is bolted to the troop carrier on its back! But where are the captives carried I hear you ask? That's easy, as these unlucky people are carried in the rhino's ribcage!

Yes, there are four unfortunate captives and boy. Do they look depressed? Who wouldn't be in their position.

GET INTO CRIME!

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Wayne's PLAY BY MAIL.

Well what do you know? The good old P.B.M. column is one year old today. Yep, the column is celebrating its first anniversary, so in traditional C+VG fashion I will be giving away LOADS of items away absolutely free, which total to over a couple of hundred pounds!!

I should tell you straight away that Mitregames has been good enough to donate a load of prizes to help you join in our celebrations and a lot of the other companies have re-issued their reduced start up offers. Therefore I am going to review all the companies that have been mentioned in the column over the year, including details of their re-vamped offers, as well as list a couple of other companies whose products I will be reviewing in the up and coming future. I extend my apologies to any company that has been either left out of the column, but I have only a limited amount of space you know.

As you should know by now, any reader who wants to apply for more than one offer MUST send in the relevant number of S.S.A.E's. Furthermore, it would help me considerably if you would enclose a separate letter with your name and address on as well as write on the back of each cheque/postal order the following: The name of the game for which you are applying; Your name and address.

This will save me a lot of time and trouble and also speed up your reply.

First of all, I will get on with latest news and gossip on the P.B.M. scene.

I have a message for some of you who applied for the B.P.B.M.A. guide to P.B.M. who still not have got it yet: *DON'T PANIC!* We have had just enough to go round, but the mailing of some were delayed due to various factors like postal strikes, lack of person power to get the hundreds of applications dealt



Busy, busy, busy, that is the only way to describe the P.B.M. scene at the moment! Yes, it's all go, with lots of special offers for all you P.B.M'ers out there, so let's get on with keeping you up to date with the news and views from the ever changing world of P.B.M. Remember though, that if you apply for more than one offer you must send the relevant amounts of S.S.A.E's required or you will only receive the first offer you ask for!

with and extremely excessive Christmas/New Year celebrations by certain parties, who, for personal reasons, will remain unnamed!!

By the time you read this, the Third British P.B.M. convention is only round the corner. Yep, on the 20th February, the biggest event in the P.B.M. calendar will be taking place at the Porchester Centre, Queensway, London W.2. This is your chance to meet and talk to the players of every major important P.B.M. in the U.K. as well as interrogate the G.Ms about their products, try your hand at live role playing, buy the latest roleplaying accessories and play the odd computer games.

If you are quick and write in the C+VG swiftly you will be able to get a 25% discount off the entrance fee. Instead of paying £2.00 on the door, you can get your ticket for £1.50 plus an s.s.a.e. As I write tickets are selling fast and it looks like the convention is going to be very well attended. With an advance ticket, not only are you guaranteed entry, but you will be allowed in immediately, with no queuing in the London rain. Please make all cheques/P.Os payable to The B.P.B.M.A. and mark the envelope in the right hand corner with "P.B.M. CONVENTION".

Nova Productions, who has taken over the running of *Conquest,* a computerised wargaming P.B.M., has now obtained the rights to run two big American games in the U.K. They are namely, *'Ancient Empires'* and *'Conquest Of The Stars'*.

'Ancient Empires' is set on a mythical planet controlled by 40 players. Each empire has a different degree of limited self sufficiency in food and raw resources and trade is a necessity. The main game features are many different army types, ranging from local militia to professional cavalry through to archers and many others. There is also a wide scope for other factors.

'Conquest Of The Stars' is the usual type of space P.B.M. game. It involves 60 players competing over a section of the galaxy aiming for its domination and destruction of the enemy. Alien Life forms, ground units and futuristic munitions abound.

An interesting feature is that Nova is offering a £100 cash prize for the winners of each game and £25 each for the four runners up. The game should be available soon, so anyone interested should drop me a line, with a s.s.a.e.

Without a doubt, and I don't care what anyone says. *'Crime'* is the most popular computerised P.B.M. in the U.K. and probably Europe. Easy to play, fast and violent, you play the leader of a group of juvenile delinquents in the future. Your aim is to rise from street punk to mob boss. It has two levels, with the Mob boss rules being brought in for certain people when a certain level of the game has been reached. If you are easily offended or have a high standard of morals, this game is not for you. However, if you want a bloody good time (with the emphasis on the bloody!) you'll like this.

Capitol is a computerised sci fi game of galactic domination for teams of four players and

continued ▶

Wayne's PLAY BY MAIL

Earthwood is another computerised game, but this time in a fantasy setting. You play either a single character or a leader of a group of troops and you have to become the leading player and obtain various objectives to win the game. Sea Kings is the latest expansion of Earthwood and, as the title suggests, has enhanced naval combat and transport.

Crasimoff's World is a hand moderated P.B.M. in a fantasy setting. Gods, magic plants and weird creatures all abound. This was the first P.B.M. I ever played and although I stopped playing on various occasions I always returned to playing it. In fact I have taken the game up again and have found the game of a high standard indeed. To be honest, the game has had a chequered history, fluctuating between good and bad on several occasions. However, recently there has been quite a few shake ups and changes, which in my mind has improved the game no end. This game always had the potential to be big and it is once again growing in size. I will be reviewing it in the not too distant future.

K.J.C. has just bought *Trolls Bottom* a hilarious game where you play the part of a troll and have to do very trollish things indeed. To date they are just setting it up and the first few games are underway. I have played this game before and found it really wild and wacky. A fully computerised game that is definitely not to be taken seriously.

OFFERS

It's A Crime; Free Set Up, free rule book plus two free turns. Further turns either 75p or £1.25 dependent on the number of actions used.

Capitol £6.00 for rule book, set up and two free turns. Turns cost £1.75 each.

Earthwood and Sea Kings; £5.00 for Startup and rulebook and three free turns. Rounds cost £1.50.

Crasimoff's World: £6.00 set up and rulebook, plus three free turns. Further turns £1.75 each plus extra for intricate turns.

Trolls Bottom S.S.A.E. to K.J.C. via me for further details.

● The Laboratory
● Further Into Fantasy

A superb game that mixes the fun of Fantasy with terror of technology. You play an exact copy of yourself, who knows that they are shortly going to be transported to Dorm, a hostile medieval type planet, so you have a short while to take with you what you can. Guns, hand grenades and other weapons can be taken, but whether it arrives is another question. Another game I have played since the playtest stage, which is very entertaining and exciting. The magic system is believable and the game is based on a "discover as you play basis". The Lab specialise in fast turns and they try to keep to a tremendous two day deadline. Speedy, action packed and controversial, well recommended.

Offer; Start Up £5.00, everybody who joins will get £5.00 credit in their account. Turns; £2.25 for an ultra turn, £1.75 for a normal turn.

● Legend Incorporated
● Ae's

This oddly named game has been well received by the general P.B.M. public and is well liked, so much so, G.M. and co director Jon Tode was voted best G.M. of the year at the Second British P.B.M. conference in 1987. A single figure fantasy roleplaying game, its rounds have a mass of description. The world is divided into several kingdoms which are run by different G.Ms. Has the biggest selection of gods to worship out of any P.B.M. and has a large selection of races and character classes. I used to play but dropped out after a disagreement with the G.M. that I won't go into. When I played I thought it was very stylish, if a bit too far fetched.

Offer; None, as all their players places are taken. HOWEVER, rumour has it that they may be at the Third British P.B.M. convention signing up a limited amount of new players on a first come first served basis. The only way to find out is attend.

● Mitregames
● Midgard, Global Supremacy

Family Wars is a gangster type game, where you play the part of a mafia god father. You take on other godfathers via your forces and try to take control of the city. I am playtesting this game at the moment and will bring you a full report when the game is commercially released.

Offer; Aegyptus £2.50 for free start up and rule book plus three turns. Family Wars; S.S.A.E. to N.A.B. via me for further details.

● Sloth Enterprises
● Saturnalia, Gameplan, Kings Of Steel, Enchiridion.

Saturnalia is my personal favourite single figure Fantasy role playing game. I have played it for nearly three years and the game still enthralls me. What makes this game is the history and the politics, they are dealt with in so much depth it is amazing. Another game that went through a bad patch, but has come back better than ever. Voted best game at the Second British P.B.M. convention, where Sloth was voted best company. You could play this game on many levels and still find more to have a crack at. The G.M's replies are of good quality and this company has one of the best G.Ms in the country at the moment.

Gameplan is an American Football P.B.M. that is computer moderated. You play the coach of a team and it is your job to decide on the tactics and the plays that hopefully will lead you to the superbowl.

Kings Of Steel is a hand moderated wargame. I found it enjoyable with its powercards and politics. Interplayer relations are a must!! Diplomacy, double dealing and dirty tricks are required. You must lead your three armies to triumph over the forces of evil. However, you must overcome the civil war between the opposing player forces at first, before you can become the eventual winner. Wargaming tactics are an advantage but not essential. Fun to play and turns only have to be submitted once a month.

The Enchiridion is a game where you can win money. You create a team of adventurers and it is your task to rescue the famous tome Enchiridion from the mazes of the mighty mage, Menkar the Magnificent. Another team game where you play with the three other players. The first person to discover the tome wins 10% of all the turn fees, which, dependent on how long the game goes on, could be some sizeable sum.

Offers; Saturnalia: Start up and rulebook £4.00 plus three free turns. Future turns £1.75.

Kings Of Steel Rulebook and start up £5.00 plus 2 free turns. Further turns: £2.00.

Gameplan: Start up and rulebook FREE plus two free turns. Future turns; £1.50.

Enchiridion; Start up and rule book £5.00 plus three free turns. Future turns £1.75.

That's all until next month. Keep those letters coming in!!




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ENDURANCE GAMES



Pacman is back, and hungrier then ever! Clare Edgeley reports on Pacman's reappearance and on Atari's new coin-op, Xybots. No Arcade Action would be complete without a combat game – Guerilla War supplies the action.

GUERILLA WAR

Guerilla War from SNK features Karl, hero of the revolution, attempting single handed, or sometimes with a partner, to overthrow the King's forces. This one's the stuff of a real Banana Republic.

It's a truly Ramboesque blast 'em up and from the start of the game your machine gun gets into action. In fact the action doesn't stop as you invade the island with bullets flying, hurling grenades at ambush points and proving your prowess at dodging bullets.

Almost as soon as you've stepped off the gunboat you're target for the enemy who move down towards your landing point in a group, guns blazing and looking as if they mean business. In these early stages it's fairly easy to stay out of trouble by keeping out of bullet range. Both yours and the enemy bullets can only travel a short distance before they lose their impetus and dodging them is a cinch. Later on in the game, when you're surrounded, getting out of the way isn't quite so easy.

In many of the attacks on you there will be one gunner dressed in red – the others are all in dull combat gear. This guy always carries a heavy duty weapon and when he dies you can pick it up. Then woe betide the enemy. Shooting him means creeping up to within bullet range which can be tricky as by this time you're in range of enemy bullets and he's always well protected.

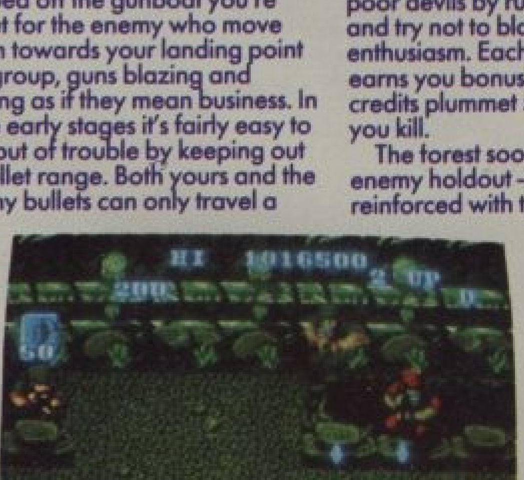
Hostages seem to line your route, tied to trees and helpless to dodge the gun fire. Free these poor devils by running up to them and try not to blast them in your enthusiasm. Each hostage released earns you bonus points – your credits plummet 500 for every one you kill.

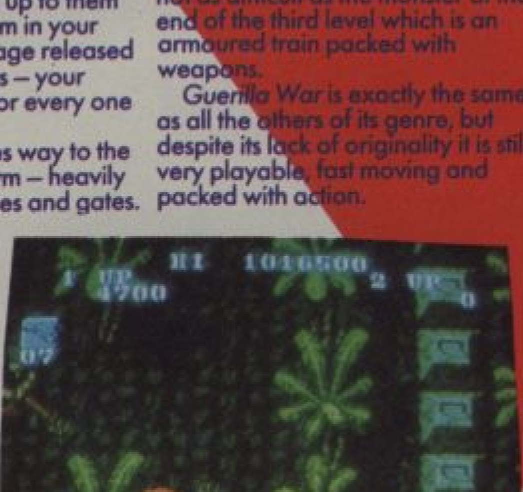
The forest soon gives way to the enemy holdout – a farm – heavily reinforced with trenches and gates. The only way through is via the entrance which is heavily guarded. Tanks zoom out spraying canon fire and a machine gunner sits just inside the gate. The enemy try to ambush you, soldiers are hiding in bushes and the only way through, with any guarantee of safety, is to capture a tank and blast your way through. As soon as a tank becomes vacant, an 'In' sign flashes on its top. Leap in and start blasting. If you can, at the same time, shoot a red soldier and pick up his weapon, your tank will be equipped with a flame thrower, or something equally devastating.

At the end of each level you'll come across the enemy leader who seems impervious to your bullets. Dressed in flying jacket to give him some pretence of leadership, he stands protected by his men, laughing at you. Once you've got him you have to cope with a huge chopper, hovering just above the treetops spraying the area with thousands of bullets.

The end of the level is reached with the appearance of a massive tank. Like the helicopter, this is particularly difficult to destroy, but not as difficult as the monster at the end of the third level which is an armoured train packed with weapons.

Guerilla War is exactly the same as all the others of its genre, but despite its lack of originality it is still very playable, fast moving and packed with action.







XYBOTS

Xybots from Atari looks, at first sight, incredibly complicated and it's one of those intriguing games where it's best to watch someone playing for a few minutes before shoving lots of cash into the machine.

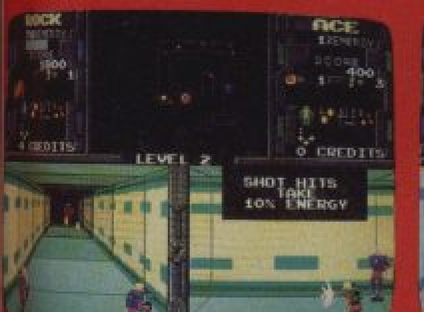
Xybots are robots and range widely in shape, aggressiveness, size and colour. Patrolling a tortuous maze of corridors, split by fine partitions, these metal monsters will zap anyone attempting to thread a path through the labyrinth.

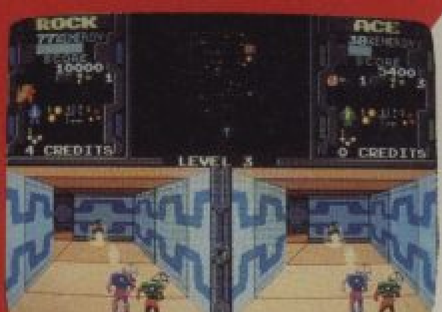
And this is where you come in, because, whether you like it or not, you're stuck in the maze and the only way to get out is via an exit at the far end. *Xybots* could have been boring, but some nice features have been added which turns this into an addictive game requiring some skill to beat it.

The game is played on a split screen, the bottom half of which is divided to provide two playing areas, one for you and a partner – and though you can play singly, it's more fun with two. The top half of the screen is divided into three with two status boxes for each player and in the middle a map of the current maze. The perspective when looking down a corridor is fantastic. Using the joystick you can change the viewpoint of the maze to the four compass points, each time viewing the area from a new direction. And, of course, that way









you'll be able to catch a glimpse of any Xybots lurking behind a corner supposedly out of sight.

At the start you'll be traversing the maze blind, with no idea of the numbers of Xybots patrolling the corridors. These tend to pop out firing at you and just as quickly retreat to safety. You have to follow them, catch them in the open and then blast them. Dodging the enemy fire can be difficult if there are several Xybots gunning for you at the same time, however, there are a few bollards dotted around the maze which afford ample cover.

Each time you're hit your energy levels decrease and can only be replenished by picking up energy pods. These are carried by special Xybots but first you must kill them. Some energy pods are stronger and will completely refill your store – these are shown on the map as flashing diamonds, though often they're too far away to do you much good.

Money must also be picked up for use in the interim levels of the game. Again, the coins are carried by Xybots and are a vital part in the strategy of the game. Only if you have collected enough cash will you be able to buy extras at the end of each level. As you travel to new levels, the size of each maze gets larger and the numbers of Xybots patrolling its corridors increase. You will need to buy extras like a Guard Mapper, Enemy Mapper and Wall Mapper if you are to get through alive. The Guard Mapper puts the position of enemy patrolling guards on the map, the same goes for Enemy Mapper.

If playing with a friend, you can transfer some money to his/her account if one of you is short. That way, when patrolling the corridors you both have an equal chance. When two people are playing, and travelling the same route together, you will be able to see two characters in your section of the screen, that is if you are both looking at the game using the same view angle. Blasting the enemy in tandem is a whole lot quicker than going it alone singly, when there are two characters on the screen, take care when shooting. Hit your friend with a blast of your lasers and his energy will decrease rapidly. This is the first two player game I've come across where the second player can be affected in this way.

While playing I met David Andrews from London who proved to be pretty nifty with the joystick. He owns a Commodore 64 and programmes his own games. David thinks *Xybots* is ace: "Well, it's the best thing that's come out for a long time. It's a really good idea and the fact that you can see two players on the screen at the same time makes it a great game."

David has been playing *Xybots* for three days. That, in my books, makes him a master at the game. He's a lot better than me anyway!

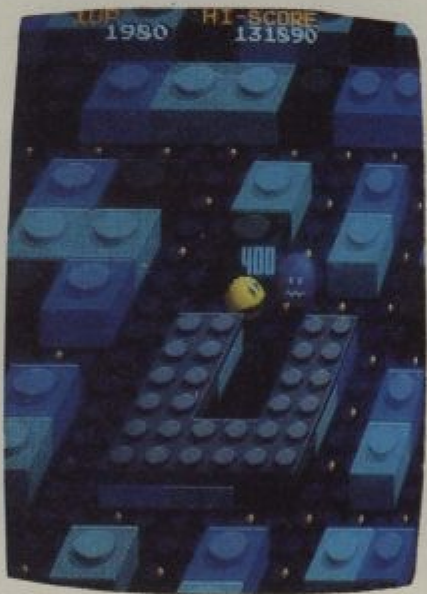
PACMANIA



Pacman, that wonderful ball of fun, is back in an orgy of pill gobbling in Namco's revamped version of the classic game, called *Pacmania*. And the funny thing is that, even after all these years, the game's lost none of its appeal.

Gorging himself on pills and scaring off ghosts, Pacman will awaken all the old skills as you roll him around the maze. The look of the game has been given a total facelift and dragged into the hi-tech world of the eighties, though the gameplay is still very much the same. The major change is the 3D aspect of each screen, the large scrolling mazes on each level and the huge sprites. Pacman is now an enormous spherical figure sporting a wide grin, and the ghosts – Inky, Blinky and Co. – are revealed in bright new colours.

The first screen looks as if it's been assembled from a lego kit, the maze isn't too large and the ghosts aren't as cunning as in later levels. It's a fairly simple task to whizz round picking up pills and avoiding the nasties. This first level doesn't require much in the way of tactics. Just pick up the odd piece of fruit for bonus points and, by eating large orange energy pills, temporarily put the ghosts out of action.



It's on later levels, when the mazes become tortuous and the ghosts more cunning that you'll need to sort out some sort of strategy before tackling each new screen.

You'll soon spot the changes. Pacman now leap over the ghosts and even change direction in mid-jump. This is vital when four of five ghosts are converging on you from all directions and there's no escape. Also, you can send the ghosts off on a false trail if you do jump and then change direction. The ghost will trundle away leaving you unmolested for a short time.

Eating orange energy pills causes the ghosts to turn blue and flicker. Now is the time to run into them for bonus points. It's really cute, they disappear leaving only a pair of eyes which float off to the ghost pen. There they immediately reform but hopefully you'll be far away and it'll take them a few seconds to find you again. There are only a few orange energy pills on each level and they shouldn't be wasted. The best tactic is to lead as many ghosts as possible to the pill and then gobble it at the last minute.

All the ghosts are now in the immediate vicinity and you should be able to kill them in the short time they're vulnerable. Do this and your score will double for each ghost caught.

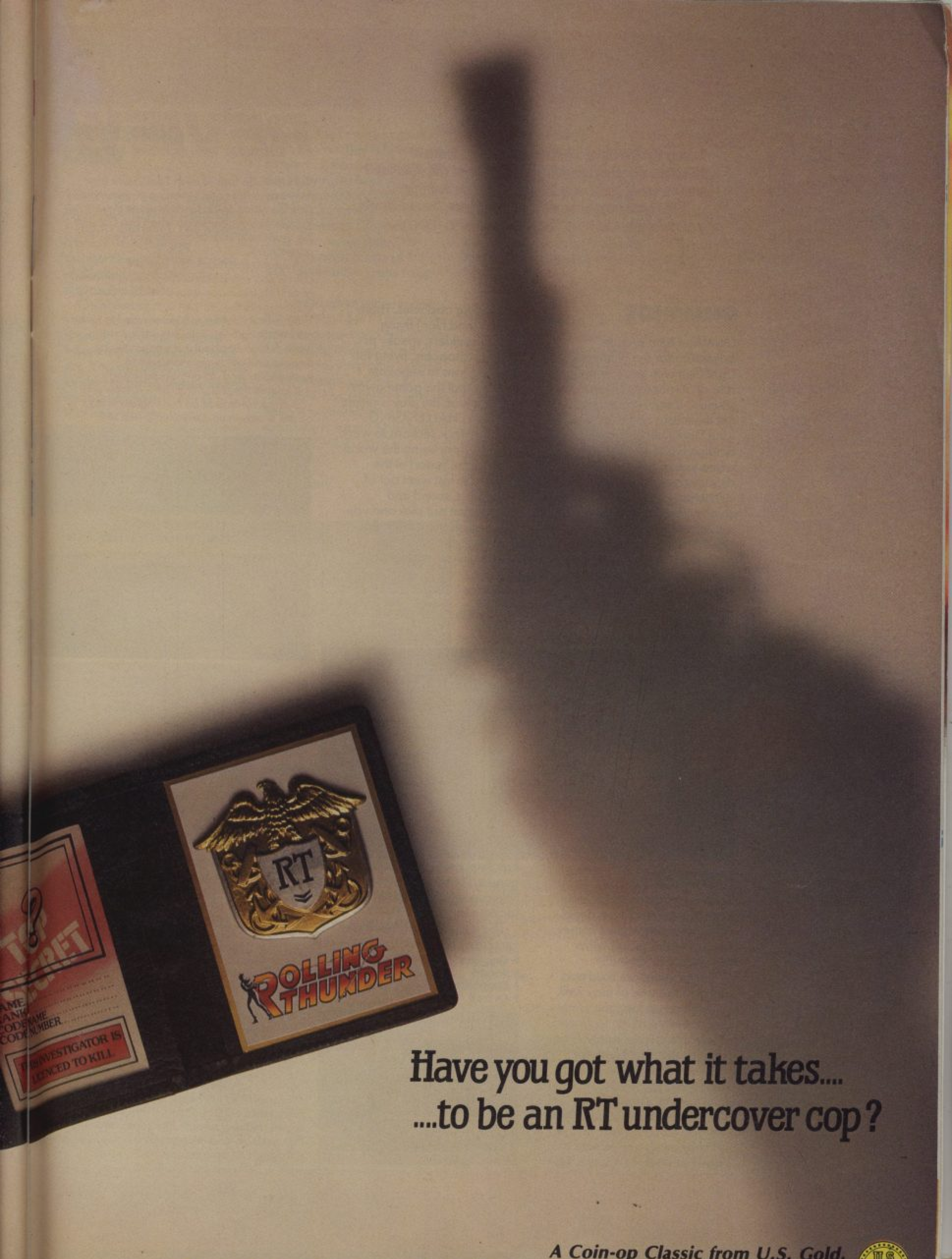
Other coloured bonus pills lie around the maze which increase your speed for a short time and generally make life easier for you.

Pacmania makes such a change from the run of blast 'em-to-bits and shoot 'em-ups and still retains a high level of addiction.

ROLLING THUNDER

namco




RT
ROLLING THUNDER
Have you got what it takes....
....to be an RT undercover cop?

MEAN MACHINES REVIEWS

Tony Takoushi checks out the latest Nintendo smashes, reports on all the hot news and takes a look at your letters.
All that and he still finds time to update your high scores. Take it away, Tony.

GUMSHOE

Gumshoe is an arcade adventure for the Nintendo Light Gun with you taking the role of Stephenson (Doesn't sound v. tough) and trying to get the missus back, but the evil King Dom (who is this man?) is holding her to ransom and wants you to deliver five diamonds as ransom.

You play against a smooth scrolling backdrop and must move constantly. Your Mac-clad here moves 1 by shooting just below his feet to make him jump onto platforms where he wastes the nasties.

There are absolutely zillions of sections to work through with many different and challenging obstacles. There are low (and high) flying bottles, boulders, sneaky pits, cars, grasshoppers, flying fish and platforms to negotiate. I could not put this game away! It is ridiculous, the play is simple but VERY CHALLENGING. There are four sections to work through (work being the word) and you can restart at the section you last went out of.

Graphics, sound and presentation are slick and you will be missing out on a real GEM (sorry!).

An absolute must for light gunners.

- **Graphics** 7
- **Sound** 8
- **Playability** 8
- **Overall** 8



TENNIS

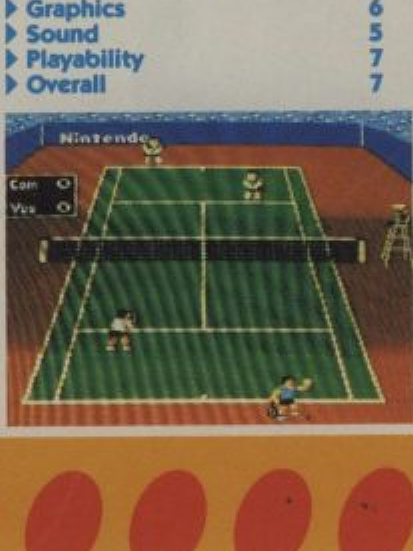
Tennis – What do I say about Tennis (other than I am a real nut for the stuff when it comes to playing the sport!), other than that, it IS TENNIS!

The graphics are solid and convey the sense of play well. You can serve, lob (one of my faves) and smash on forehand or backhand quite easily. One of the biggest problems for many sport sims is the lack of response in the joystick, not so with this one.

The match is the best of three sets, you can choose from five difficulty levels and select singles or doubles options. Tie-breakers are played at six games all and there's even a little cup sequence at the end for the winner.

This is a good bog standard version of Tennis.

- **Graphics** 6
- **Sound** 5
- **Playability** 7
- **Overall** 7



Kelly McGillis fans or even Tom Cruise fans (Hey, we're not sexist!) this is your chance to play the game of the film that made them famous on your Nintendo when *Top Gun* hits the shops next year at around the twenty five pound mark.

As usual I approached a licensed conversion with a little of the cashing-in-on-a-good-film-lets-make-a-lot-of-money out of a game cynicism.

Somebody out there is determined to turn me into an optimist. *Top Gun* is a top rate game, no doubt about it, it was written by Konami and will swamp you with its presentation and action packed format.

It follows the plot of the film – loosely with you at the controls of an F-14 fighter taking on the enemy in air-to-air/air-to-sea and



air-to ground combat. On starting the game you are presented with a really yummy hi-res piccy of your fighter bursting into life on the deck of a carrier, you then have to choose from three different missiles to arm the plane; Hound, Wolf or Tiger. Each missile has its own characteristics and each has a different quantity (Wolf has 20, Tiger has 10 so sharpen your tactical wit).

A map and a message tell you about the mission. There are four of them though level one is purely to get the feel of your fighter with the odd dogfight along the way, level two has you destroying a carrier out at sea (the enemy being destroyers, killer cruisers, shifty subs and planes), level three is a ground defences job (on this level you have to take out the enemy fortress while avoiding or destroying guided missiles and low altitude attack helicopters).

The screen has a cockpit at the bottom showing altitude, speed, fuel, damage guage (from enemy fire), missiles left to fire, artificial horizon and a radar. The radar is absolutely vital as it shows the enemy planes coming at you and the angle to expect attack. The radar also doubles up to show you when a fighter is on your tail (the only way to shake him off is to OUTFLY HIM).

Initially very simple graphics on the cockpit display BUT do not be deceived the airplanes, ships, tanks, missiles, THE LOT are all superbly drawn and silky smooth. The sound and music fit in perfectly and the gameplay is deep, satisfying and pure arcade gold.

WRECKING CREW

This is a game involving two of my favourite game characters – Mario and Luigi. You have to destroy walls that are staggered around the screen and linked by platforms and disposable ladders.

On entering a level the screen scrolls up and down showing the play area and where the enemies and walls are. You can climb up or down ladders to get to platforms and some walls take 1, 2 or 3 knocks to destroy (you progress on destroying all the walls). There is help and hinderance, help comes from strategically placed bombs which destroy all ladders and weakens walls on a level, and doors to mislead the nasties which you can open around the screen, drums and pillars are useful for trapping the enemy but watch out for fireballs, the foreman (this guy is a real pain in the . . .) he follows you around and pushes you just when you DO NOT



need it. The other zombie like creatures are Eggplant Man, Gotchswrench and Gotchawrench Jr.

Loss of life is instantaneous on touching the creatures or fireballs.

Every four rounds there is a bonus screen, here you have to look behind twenty or so doors to find a coin that is hidden, the foreman is knocking down the doors trying to beat you to it, so you have to move some!

There is a two player option, a design mode (so you set up your own screens) and the ability to start on any of the 100 levels in the game (nice one).

I was hooked with this one, the morning I got it I played for two hours solid and got to level 18 BEFORE changing out of my jammies into some clothes!

Wrecking Crew is VERY playable, has plenty of levels to keep you interested, good graphics 'n' sound AND best of all MARIO AND LUIGI . . .

- **Graphics** 7
- **Sound** 7
- **Playability** 8
- **Overall** 8



BALLOON FLIGHT

Balloon Fight owes a debt to possibly the looniest game ever dreamt up – Joust by Williams which featured lance-carrying knights who floated around screen on ostriches attempting to prick nasties with their poles.

For Balloon Fight read Joust Mk2. You control a cutie little character with two balloons on his back (more than a touch of Pooyan) and have to flap your way around the screen trying to puncture other jolly nasty characters balloons.

There are platforms placed around the screen which you can use to drop down on the enemy to pop their balloons and then kick them once more to destroy them. If you can do the manoeuvre in a single step there are extra points to be had.

Your character has a strong inertial roll to his movements so timing is all to master the play. Other dangers to watch out for are lightning bolts, a sneaky



but very cute fish that leaps up and grabs you if you fly too low over a lake that appears on certain screens.

There are one or two player options (two player can be team or competition play) and an 'I-can-do-it-if-I-keep-cool' bonus round where you have to capture balloons that travel up the screen out of your tubes across the bottom of the screen.

There is a really GROO-VY Balloon Trip option where you float from right to left across scrolling screens trying to prick every balloon in sight while avoiding the lightning bolts.

The graphics are nothing special and the sound is merely adequate. Nevertheless, the game delivers in its FEEL.

Overall this is a great game for those of you with that urge to surge and a little bit of finesse on the joystick.

- **Graphics** 5
- **Sound** 7
- **Playability** 8
- **Overall** 8

LETTERS

There still seems to be a fair bit of debate as to which system to buy. There really isn't a clear cut answer to this, both systems are superb. At the moment Sega has a better games catalogue than Nintendo in the UK, worldwide the Nintendo has a far greater software base than the Sega. But in the UK at present there is a shortage of Sega carts (even I have a hard time getting them from Mastertronic!) so it really boils down to what you want and how quickly you want it.

There have been some tasty tips this month too, Scott Lea tells me that when you get ten lives in *Super Marios Bros* you get a 10,000 point bonus and a little crown appears.

Scott has also topped two million on *SMB*. Is this the UK record?

Tim Wilson of W. York has sent in some tips for *Rocky*. He says when fighting Apollo keep punching him in the head and try to get him on the ropes, and when fighting Lang forget about the head and concentrate on his stomach. He is also a *Quartet* fan (my kinda person) and suggests that on round six get the key and return to the surface (via the warp) you will then find yourself on the last screen where the big alien is. To kill him you must destroy him piece by piece starting at the bottom and working your way up.

Special thanks go to Peter Russell of Maida Vale, you write long letters but they are interesting! There are too many points to answer here but it's good to see a dedicated Nintendo man, incidentally, the Sega has a Z80 processor, 64K of RAM, 128K of ROM, 128K video RAM, 64 colours, screen resolution of 256x192 (in 16 colours), 256 sprites (each sprite being 8x8 pixels in size), three voice and four octave sound chip and can handle cards of 64K and cartridges of 128K and 256K

Keep those letters coming. I really do enjoy reading them and I will try to get as many answered as possible (honest!).

MEAN MACHINES – HIGHSCORES

NINTENDO

SUPER MARIO BROS	2,765,150	SCOTT LEA
● ICE CLIMBER	43,160	GARRY NORRIS
● DUCK HUNT	377,100	GARRY NORRIS
● PINBALL	68140	GARRY NORRIS
● KUNG FU	365,200	MICHAEL DALY

SEGA

● SPACE HARRIER	13,800,000	JEFF MINTER
● OUTRUN	28,751,480	PETER RAMDINE
● CHOPLIFTER	1,333,000	KEVIN GRIFFITHS
● HANG ON	1,156,000	ADRIAN GREEN
● BLACK BELT	284,300	GARRY NORRIS
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● TRANSBOT	243,440	ADRIAN GREEN
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Street Scene....

This is *Hotball*, a football simulation on the Atari ST and Amiga from the French software house, Satory.

The game is viewed from above and you play in an enclosed area where the use of the wall will help you get past your opposition. You can dribble with both feet, pass to the wing, shoot and score.

A referee will blow for half time, full time, fouls and goals. You can play for a six, eight or ten minute game. A pull down menu will remind you of the score and the time left to play.

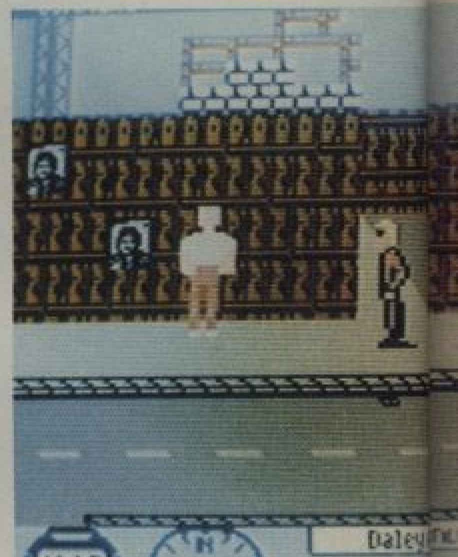


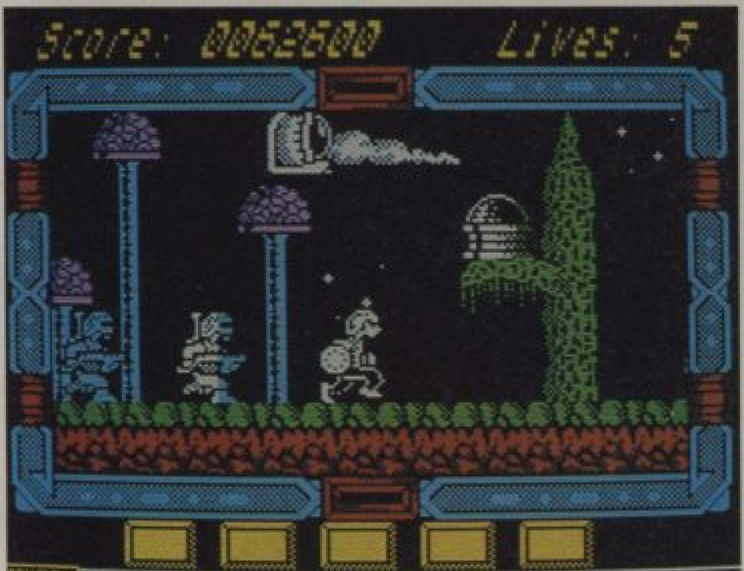
Expect Piranha's *Roy of the Rovers* game to kick off in late January on the CBM 64 and in early February on Spectrum and Amstrad.

The game is in two parts, the first a sort of arcade adventure and the second a football simulation.

Disaster has hit the famed Melchester Rovers! They are under threat of being bought and bulldozed by city property ground developer ex-Colonel Ballstaff.

Roy Race, player manager, and full-time hero has arranged a celebrity five-a-side football match in a bid to save the club, but with only hours to go his





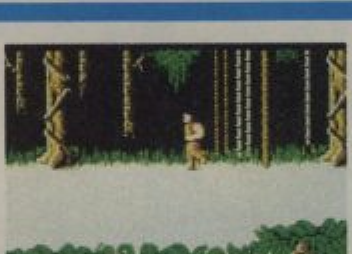
Northstar is an Earth-orbit space station built to hold thousands of people engaged in producing food for a famine-ravaged planet. But something has gone wrong. Messages from Earth have gone unanswered. You have been selected to investigate. On arrival at the station you find no human survivors and the place over-run by aliens.

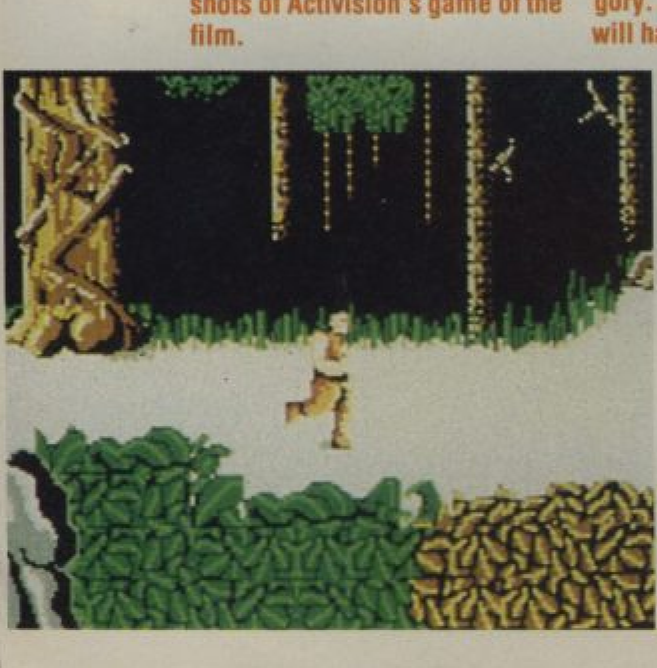
Your mission involves killing off the aliens and reactivating the life-support system.

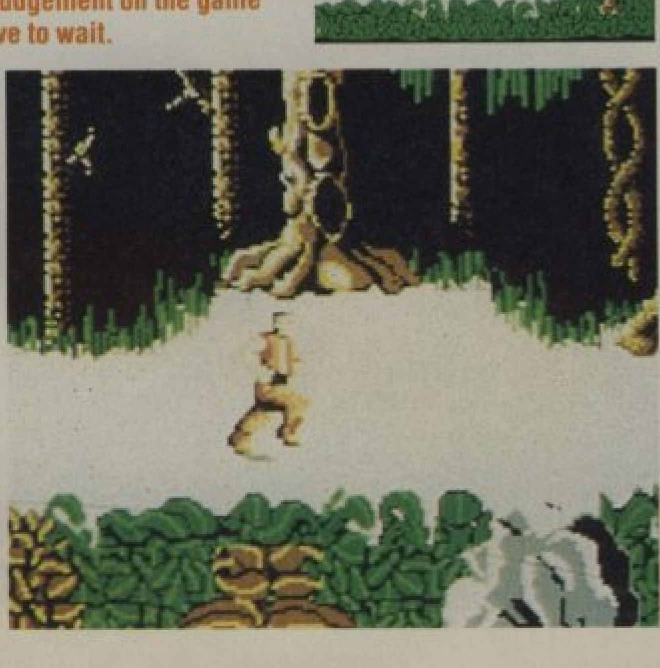
Northstar will soon be out on the Spectrum (£7.99), Amstrad and Commodore (£9.99/£14.99) and Atari ST (£19.99).

Following the ever so muscular Dolph Lundgren as He-Man from *Masters of the Universe*, comes the equally impressive figure of Arnold Schwartzenegger in *Predator*. And these are preview shots of Activision's game of the film.

Arnie plays a soldier sent into the jungle to rescue hostages. But in the end he ends up being stalked by an alien who has come to earth for a hunting trip. The film is great fun – if a little gory. Judgement on the game will have to wait.







Gremlin Graphics is hoping to repeat the success of *The Way of the Tiger* with *Blood Valley*, another adaptation of a Duelmaster series fighting fantasy book by Mark Smith and Jamie Thompson.



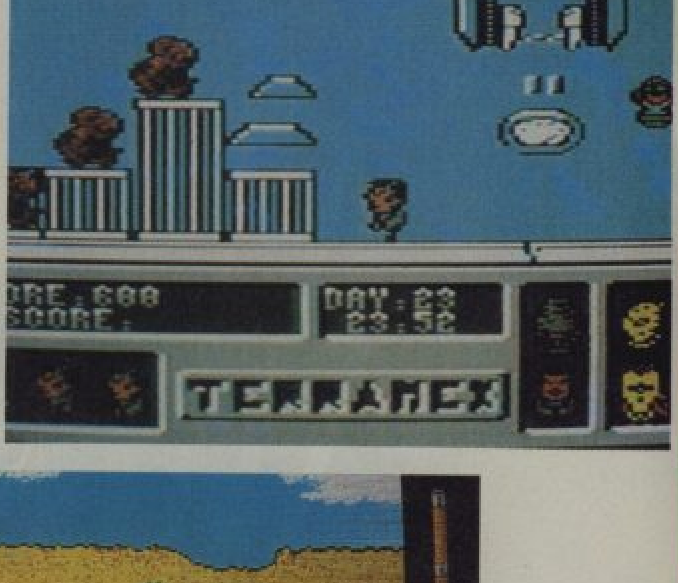
team has been kidnapped. Roy needs to rescue his players to win the planned match and save the club. How will the game go for Melchester if Roy only finds three players . . . two players . . . one player or if he has to face the opposition alone?

In the first part of the game you guide Roy through the streets, houses and buildings of Melchester in a desperate race against time to find the team. In the second part, you play the five-a-side match with any players you've rescued to see whether you can win, and save the club.

Cassette versions will cost £9.95 and on disk £14.95.







There seems to be a distinct improvement in quality of the games coming out of the Argus stable of lables – witness *The Hunt for Red October* and now *Terramex* from Quicksilva.

Terramex is an arcade adventure involving the search for Dr Albert Eyestrain who predicted a giant asteroid was on course to destroy the earth. Everybody laughed and sneered so the good doctor disappeared in a huff. But now his prediction has come to pass. The asteroid has almost arrived and the search is on to find Eyestrain to help avert this catastrophe. But once found, he has to be convinced that humanity is worth saving.



The player has a choice of five nationalities to control to track him down. It is the standard format using various objects to progress through the game.

Terramex is out on all major formats soon.

It's a story of survival and escape. The evil Archveult has decreed you must be hunted down like an animal. Your survival is only guaranteed if you can escape from the evil of Blood Valley.



Halo Jones is the next 2000AD comic character to receive the computer game treatment from Piranha. She is a young woman born in the late 50th century on a structure called the Hoop, which houses all of America's unemployed. It has everything except jobs.

The Hoop is full of various dangerous characters: Distant Drummers – a sect who implant music receivers in their skulls which make them placid or violently enraged. Proximen – giant, armless lizards who suffer racial attacks. Ordinary Street Punks – who just cause trouble.

In the game, Halo Jones must venture forth for the monthly supplies. Not only must she survive attacks from the Distant Drummers, Proximen and Punks, other things can happen in this land of boredom and degredation.

She is armed with a variety of offensive weapons to help you through such disasters – Sputsticks (nausea gas), Zenades (gas causing laid backness) – plus, to warn you of problems coming your way, Swifty Frisko the dataday disc jockey, gives out a constant stream of advice, news and record intros over the airwaves.

Halo Jones should be released in May.



Lee Enfield is SPACE ACE

And will be available on ATARI ST, PC, CBM64 & SPECTRUM



LEE ENFIELD is invariably to be found slap-bang in the middle of trouble. His unique ability to deal with trouble puts him top of the list when it comes to calling for a man who is never out of his depth.

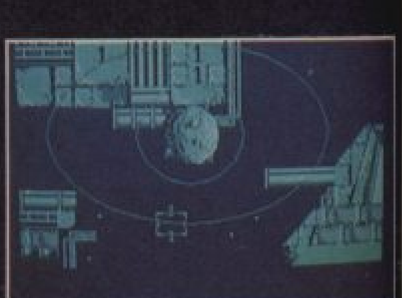
Even time is no barrier to Lee solving the trickiest of problems, for he is a new hero "A Time Troubleshooter."

He can speed through the third dimension to wherever he's needed, ready to don whichever mantle is required as he challenges evil whenever it appears, hence his title of SPACE ACE.

And so in this, his first appearance on the British computer screen, Lee has had to travel into the 22nd Century to take on Troopers, Snipers and strange galactic monsters in his bold fight against the enemies of Mankind, truly living up to his reputation as SPACE ACE.

The first LEE ENFIELD, TIME TROUBLESHOOTER, program is an actionpacked shoot-em-up, and includes a space guide.





Selected titles are available from all good retailers including WHSMITH Boots

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THAT'S LIFE?

● As you requested during our telephone conversation this morning I am writing to tell you about the play-by-mail games sent to my 12 year old son by K.J.C. Games.

Both my son and my daughter have been members of a computer club for some time so when he asked if he could reply to a free offer of a computer game I assumed that he meant his club magazine and agreed. In fact, the advertisement appeared in the November issue of Computer and Video Games which he had borrowed from a friend.

However, what arrived horrified me and I enclose a copy of all the material he received with the most offensive items highlighted. In the light of recent events such as the Hungerford disaster and the alleged organised sexual abuse of children in Congleton, and considering the government campaign against drug abuse, I think that this material, inciting children to pay large amounts to commit just such crimes, is frightening. The fact that this is a fantasy rather than reality does not make it potentially any the less dangerous. The most dangerous aspect of this game is that, to be successful, it is necessary to take drugs continuously, and the description of this rule makes it appear that this is not only acceptable, but that it is a desirable condition to aspire to.

I admit that in this case the situation was brought on ourselves. I have checked the issue of Computer and Video Games currently on the shelves, in which the ad. re-appears, and the full-page ad., complete with explicit picture, makes it perfectly clear what is on offer; "gang warfare" by a "drug-crazed gang". In this issue there is also an article on fantasy games featuring a picture of the "It's a Crime" rule booklet. Although the booklet does not suggest that the game is not suitable for young children this is not mentioned in either the advert or the article. Thus, as there is no age limitation and as parental consent is not required, there is nothing to stop any child applying for this "free" offer and receiving this offensive material without parents' knowledge.

I would like to see it made illegal for advertising promotions like these to offer such rubbish to children and would welcome any advice or help you may be able to give.

H. Caroline Forrest
Cheshire.

Editor's reply: Having looked closely at 'It's A Crime' I agree that the advertisement for the game should carry a warning. Editorial mentions of the game in the future will also point out its unsuitability for children.

SUCH AN UGLY MAGAZINE

● Have you lot gone stark raving mad? I mean, do you actually think you are good looking or what? It was bad enough when we had to endure picture after picture of that peroxide plonker, Wayne. But now you have gone too far. Hunk of the Month was the final straw. Those 'orrible white legs nearly made me chuck my Fish Fingers as I made the mistake of flicking through my newly purchased December issue at tea time. I tossed it on the floor. I couldn't help myself, it was a reflex action, a bid to preserve my appetite.

It was much later when I picked the thing up off the floor that I noticed the legs of the kitchen table were more appealing than your Art Editor's pins.

So please C+VG, if you really want to give us some hunks then can I suggest Dolph Lundgren, Kerry Dixon, or James Wilmott Brown from East Enders for starts.

PS What's this new Editor look like? *(Horrible!)*

Sarah Scriven,
Dursley.

TAKOUSHI SUCKS!

● Tony "I've got a mouth and I'm gonna sure as hell use it" Takoushi's comments in his Hot Gossip section have forced me to write in this letter of indignation.

So he thinks the 8-bit computers are doomed? Well I can tell you for nothing that it seems as if he knows absolutely nothing about the majority of Commie 64 or Speccie owners. Most of us are going to get "proper" jobs are gradually, I expect, "grow out" of computer games. At the moment though, we are happy to bung in a copy of *Buggy Boy* and wile away a few boring hours just playing games.

Some owners even confess to actually getting enjoyment out of their puny 8-bit machines by programming them. That is basically as far as home computers go. The majority of teenagers and computer-owners have better, or more sociable things to do. I think Tony doesn't realise that playing on a computer isn't everyone's full-time occupation, like it is his.

I predict that the 8-bit computers will not fizzle out next year or their dedicated magazines (if this were to happen though, it would obviously benefit anyone involved in a magazine like C+VG).

I predict that "us youngsters" will carry on forking out the odd tenner for a game for our 8-bit computers. We won't all go out and sell our machines as scrap metal and buy Amigas or STs. I don't want to sound incredibly corny but money does not grow on trees.

Rahul Joshi
London, NW6

What do you mean "more sociable things to do"?

NO HE DOESN'T

● I have to admit that I have never felt strongly enough about anything to write into *C+VG*. However, all of this changed with the January edition.

Firstly, I am in positive agreement with Wenchin Ng with regard to the possible expansion of the PBM coverage in *C+VG*. I'm sure that I'm not alone in that one of the principal reasons that I buy *C+VG* is for Wayne's unmatched coverage of PBM. It really is about time that Wayne's excellent reporting of the PBM scene was rewarded by an expansion of his column!

Secondly, what's happened to the heavy metal column? Just as the column was shaping up nicely, it disappears! I hope that the column is scheduled for a very speedy return.

Thirdly, Tony Takoushi's "Hot Gossip" column in January made the prediction that all dedicated magazines will go to the wall within the next 15-18 months. Well, you don't have to be a genius to see that his prediction will be fulfilled! With that in mind and from a prudent business aspect you should not neglect coverage of PBM, heavy metal, films, etc in order to remain a "purist" computer mag.

Alan Crump
London N4

Personally – I feel the games scene would be very dull without the likes of Crash, Commodore User, Zzapp, and Sinclair user. My view is that they are all here to stay a lot longer than Mr 'T' thinks.

YES, HE DOES!

● I think that your mag is great, all but for one thing. This being the Mean Machines section. The section is a good thing and warrants more pages, but should not be written by Mr Tony 'I have a big mouth and a blue head' Takoushi. Why oh why does he only write about the Nintendo breeze block? It may be the better selling machine in Japan or the rest of the world, but it isn't in Great Britain. In fact, the Sega Master System has sold twice as many units in the UK.

In the Jan 88 issue of your mag, there is only one thing about the Sega, and that is a high score chart! And, before you say there is no news on this machine, there is at least games to be reviewed. There weren't any reviews for it in the last issue and there are even less in this one.

I have recently bought *Wonderboy,* which is absolutely brilliant but I have also bought *Out Run,* which is a let down and a con for £25. That is a lot of money for me to have wasted and money which could have easily been saved by a review of the game. So come on Mr T, give us loyal readers of your rag some Sega news and reviews to chew or you might as well re-title the section nintendo – The Mean Machine That I Prefer.

Richard Hallam
Bourne End
Bucks

PS. I know it is interesting but news about Japanese versions of Nintendo games is useless, as they use a different cartridge format where as the Sega doesn't.

PPS. I think the Heavy Metal section of your mag is cool.

PPPS. I don't know why I wrote this letter as it won't get printed anyway, and even if if did you won't take any notice.

PPPPS. This took me two hours to write so it better get printed.

PPPPPP. My typewriter ribbon wore out, but I have now been down the stationers and got a new one. How about that for devotion?

PPPPPss. Bring back Mellisa.

Richard Hallam
Bourne End
Bucks

Editor's reply: Isn't it amazing how people think that by saying "I bet you won't print this letter" it will force us to to it! Wrong! we only used it because we left with a little space. Hah! Things could change soon on the Sega front soon. A little bird tells us *After Burner* and *Alien Syndrome* will be out soon. Bet that's excited you.

PS. Our Dep Ed has relatives in Bourne End. Just thought you would like to know, Richard.

THE AXE TO FALL AGAIN

● I've been reading *C+VG* for a good few years now and have always been a fan of your comic strips. But how come that after they become popular you always axe them?

First we had the Bugs, then The Bug Hunters, followed by Lieut Laww and now Shuk and Doode. How long will they last?

John Samuels,
Cookridge,
Leeds.

PS. I think Shuk and Doode are weird.

Editor's reply: Nothing lasts forever, as they say, so when we feel a cartoon strip or set of characters have run their course we feel it's better to stop before they get boring.

Oh, yes, Shuk and Doode also think you're weird as well.

● How long can the mania for converting coin-ops go on? Surely the time has come to call a halt.

Many of the conversions to the home micro have no more than a passing resemblance to the original. For example, US Gold's dismal attempt to capture *Out Run*. Disappointing is not the word.

And now I understand that Activision has got the rights to *After Burner*. Let's face it there's no way it can convert to the home micro. It's only the super cabinet and super sound system that makes the coin-op and there's no way you'll get those on the Spectrum and the rest. The end result is the name without the game.

So my plea to software houses in 1988 is to forget the coin-op conversions which are no-hopers for the home micro and concentrate on new and original concepts.

Will software houses listen to my plea? A penny to a pound they won't.

Andrew Walker, Hounslow.

● Okay, guys, it's own up time. It's no good dodging the issue, beating around the bush, making excuses, or avoiding explanations. I want answers! Who is The Fiend?

I just don't buy all the guff Keith Campbell has been spreading about this so-called mystery man who torments him. And since his so-called controversial views has started appearing in your rag – sorry, mag – I am even more suspicious about him.

I think the Fiend is Keith Campbell writing under another name in a clever attempt to get more money. Come on, admit it.

Steve Taylor,
Turnford,
Herts.

PS. I don't really think Tony Takoushi exists either. Like Father Christmas, the Loch Ness Monster and the Abominable Snowman, I think he is also a myth, a persona conjured up by some warped, twisted and bitter mind at *C+VG*.

Editor's reply: Believe it or not, Steve, The Fiend does exist and he is defintely NOT Keith Campbell. If I knew his name I would shout it to the world. All I know is that he lives – or rather lurks – in Oxfordshire and has a bank account in the name of The Fiend. That's the truth. Tony T a myth! No he really exists as well. Nobody could be that bitter as to invent him.

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Hot Gossip

by Tony Takoushi

Loud and proud and ready to shock. Yes, C+VG's very own Mr T — Tony Takoushi — is back to rant and rave about computer games. Love or hate him, just read him.

Those of you who have been whipped up into a frenzy over the lack of platform arcade adventures for the Amiga can now calm down as there is a respectable offering in the guise of *Dark Castle*. It runs on a standard Amiga and is being released in the UK by Mirrorsoft.

The scenario is familiar, you have to work your way through various scenes racking up score and bonus for each scene completed and lives left (not fogetting to collect keys along the way). The place is a castle and the play is a mish-mash of *Pitfall, Jumpman* and *Miner 2049'er*.

The game is well presented, with a swish title page of an eerie castle in the distance with flashes of thunder and digitised organ music, very spooky! You can then select from an options page, difficulty level (beginner/intermediate/advanced), demo of the game (I suggest you see this), info on game play and characters and Play to start the game.

There is also a choice of keyboard or joystick control.

You start off in a great hallway with three doors in front of you, you choose your door with the mouse and your character runs over to the door and leaps inside. Now into the game! There are dozens of screens to work through, some need careful thought, others are more gut reaction and intuition. The enemy takes the form of bats, vultures, mutants (yuk), rats, dragons, gargoyles, guards, burning eye, rock henchmen and whip henchmen — these guys are into whipping and clobbering YOU with rocks and whips. Contact with any of these is fatal and you lose a life. The exception to the rule is if you have elixirs, these can be collected along the way and can protect you from their fearsome attacks.

To balance matters you can use a mace (wicked but tasty on the eye), shield, ladders, ropes and stairs to get around each screen. The most useful weapon being your rocks you get a supply at the start of each screen and this depletes as you lob them around (you control the angle by lifting his arm to the desired point), bonus rocks can be collected around the screen (but you do have to get to them!).

The game uses a lot of digitised speech and spot effects, grunts and groans from you when attacked or stunned, mice and bats squeaking and screeching(?). The graphics I found disappointing, they are crude by Amiga standards and if a little more time had gone into them the game would have reeked of quality.

The gameplay is fast — a little TOO fast in places — and you quickly have to learn where the bats and mice are on entering a new scene. Also timing leaps is crucial (you have three types of leap standing/running and downward). There is no lack of variety with moving platforms, ropes, ladders and guards to negotiate (these are the easy bits!?).

At the end of the day it is a good product that will entertain and if you bear with the initial frustrations of cussing the joystick control it is challenging.





With the coming of the new 16-bit machines we have been spoilt with the large memories they have. Increasingly they are being used for digitised sound effects and digitised pictures.

Great, no problem, new technology, new challenges, new presentation.

I enjoy great sound. If used effectively AND appropriately, the sound really adds to a game. But just recently a lot of games use them all over the place and they end up giving me a headache instead of making me throb with pleasure.

To illustrate the point just look at *Barbarian* on the Amiga, the title sequence and the grunts and groans in the game are THE best combinations I have encountered to date. They work with the game they do not try to swamp it.



***Road Wars* from Mastertronic also demonstrates that digitised piccys can work to enhance a game and not just be a gimmick. They actively contribute to the feel of the theme and play of the game because they were designed for the game and not the other way around.**

At the moment I feel all that lovely, lovely memory is regarded as a novelty and it is a question of 'what can we fit in it.'

All you ST and Amiga owners will have thrilled (as I have) to the *boom booms* in many of the games, but aren't you getting tired of it again and again?

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